1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

846 853 As regards *the child*, the umbilical cord is anointed every day; he begins to take the breast and drink the "*milombyana*," the great medicine which we shall describe later on.

During these days many taboos must be observed:

The *husband* is not allowed to enter the hut on any pretext; this is not on account of his being unclean, quite the contrary. A birth does not contaminate the father amongst the Ba-Thonga as it does in other tribes. He is not obliged to undergo any medication. His exclusion from the conjugal hut is due entirely to the fact that his wife is polluted by the blood of the lochia, and he would run the greatest danger to himself if he came near.

846 854 *All married people* are also excluded (bakhili) viz. all those who have regular sexual intercourse. Should they touch the child, he would die. If however a woman wishes very much to go and see the new-born, she must abstain from relations with her husband during two days. Then she can be admitted into the hut. On the other hand young girls are welcome in the hut, but they must not kiss the baby during these first days. "It is not yet firm; it is only water," as they say; later on, when it begins to laugh and to play, they may kiss it. Even the father may do so then; when he comes back from a journey, he holds it in his arms and kisses it on the temple. Supposing that the 846 umbilical cord has now fallen off normally, the confinement period will be at an end. This termination is marked by two rites.

The mother of the delivered woman will have *to smear with clay the floor of the hut*. This is the great cleansing act which brings to an end a marginal period. It takes away all the dangerous blood, and the husband as well as all the other dwellers in the village will be allowed to enter the hut.

846 751 278 825 The second act is *the rite of the broken pot* (ku tjibelela shirengelen, viz. to make fire under the shirengele, the bit of broken pot used for the purpose). This is a medical treatment and a religious ceremony combined. It is performed by the family doctor on the threshold of the hut in the following way: he puts into this piece of broken pottery pieces of skin of all the beasts of the bush: antelopes, wild cats, elephants, hippopotami, rats, civet cats, hyenas, elands and snakes of dangerous kinds, and roasts

846 751 825 278 856 them till they burn. The smoke then rises, and he exposes the child to it for a long time : the body, face, nose and mouth. The baby begins to cry ; he sneezes, he coughs ; this is just what is wanted. Then the doctor takes what remains of the pieces of skin, grinds them, makes a powder, mixes it with *tihuhlu* (1) grease of the year before last and consequently hard enough to make an ointment. With this ointment he rubs the whole body of the child, especially the joints, which he extends gently in order to assist the baby's growth.

846 751 853 All this fumigation and manipulation is intended to act as a preventive. Having been thus exposed to all external dangers, dangers which are represented by the beasts of the bush, the child may go out of the hut. He is now able "to cross the foot prints of wild beasts" (tjemakanya mitila) without harm. Snakes will not bite him, at any rate their bite will not hurt him ; lions will not kill him. The remainder of the powder is put into a little bit of reed closed at both ends, which the mother has to carry with her during the whole nursing period in order to continue the treatment.

846 755 763 821 This rite of the broken pot is also the great preventive remedy against the much dreaded ailment of babies, *convulsions*. If a child suffers from this, they will say : "a tlalile shirengelen," viz. "he did not find any help in the broken pot" and the parents will go to another doctor whose drugs are more powerful, to have the child once more exposed to the smoke. It may even be that a grown-up man will undergo this treatment again, if he has been ill with convulsions, but, in this case, the broken pot with its pieces of skin is put on the head of the patient, which has been first covered with a wisp of cuscuta (hare dja yendjeyendje). The great aim of all the medication of children by the "milombyana" is also to fight against convulsions, as we shall see (2).

(1) The tihuhlu are the seeds of the ukuhlu tree known under the name of mafurra. They are oleaginous and the fat (mafura) obtained from them is very much used for external applications amongst the Thongas.

(2) In *Savage Childhood* p. 12, Dudley Kidd describes this "baptism of smoke" amongst Zulus. Some dirt is scraped from the father's body and is mixed with other drugs in order to impart to the child his ancestral spirit. Another ingredient

846 851 603 For any subsequent children, the feast will be reduced to the presentation by the grandmother of a basket of food to "*tlangela ñwana*," viz. to "celebrate the child."

III. *The Nursing Period.*

853 The little child has been taken out of the confinement hut (humesha busahanen). He is now allowed to go outside. The nursing period then begins and will last two and a half or three years; but before we study the rites which mark it, let us consider the manner in which the baby is carried and his diet during this period.

1) The Ntehe.

854 A little child is not carried by his mother in her arms, but in a softened skin which is called *ntehe*. The preparation of the ntehe is subject to many prescribed customs.

The first of these is this: the ntehe must not be looked out before the birth of the child, or it would bring misfortune. This is a taboo which I might call a "taboo of prevision." Some other taboos of this kind are met with in our tribe.

[604] For a first-born child, the skin must be provided by the maternal uncle. This is a rule, but the custom is not tabooed (1). The father may also prepare it, if necessary.

A South-African woman with her child in the ntehe.

825 854 That is taboo. Let them take the skin of a duiker (blue antelope), of a goat or of a mhala (impala). Sheep skins are

(1) Though the term taboo generally means a prohibition, I take the liberty of using it in a positive sense: A custom is taboo or is tabooed when its transgression is a taboo.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

only employed when three or four children have died in previous years and the mother is in the state of destitution called *buvumba*. (Chap. II.)

The ntehe is arranged in such a way that the legs of the animal are used as straps, the forelegs are tied around the neck, the hindlegs around the waist and the child is in that way held well against his mother's shoulders. He can either show his head outside his ntehe or be entirely covered by it. This way of carrying babies is very convenient : mother and child get so accustomed to it that a baby, when you lift it, stretches out its legs at once at right angles with its body in order to sit on its mother's back ; and the mother can easily do all her work, even till her fields with the baby on her back in its ntehe !

2) The diet during the nursing period.

The child is nursed by the mother. He is allowed to take the breast at any time. There is nothing like a diet regulation amongst Natives and they would deem it cruelty to refuse the breast to a crying child.

There are some customs relating to the *milk*. When a mother has to leave her child for a short time, she squeezes a few drops of her milk on his neck in order to prevent him feeling thirsty. When she has been absent for more than one day (this can only happen when the child is able to eat some solid food) and returns home, before nursing the child again she heats a bit of broken pot in the fire and squeezes into it a little milk from each breast. The liquid evaporates. The reason of the custom is this : the mother's milk has grown cold ; it must be warmed again ; otherwise the child will be constipated. This is a taboo (1). When a baby bites the teat, it is regarded as naughtiness and the mother scratches its forehead as a punishment.

Mothers not having enough milk use a kind of shrub called

(1) Compare with the Zulu milk charms described by D. Kidd. *Savage Childhood*, page 38.

performs the religious rite (hahla). He takes between his first finger and thumb a small quantity of the half digested grass which has been taken from the paunch of the animal, makes a little ball of it, touches his tongue with it and emits a sound resembling " tsu "... as if he were slightly spitting. This is the customary sacramental act in most of the sacrifices. (See Part VI.) He stands behind the wedding pair and, looking straight in front of him towards them, speaks to the gods, that is to say to the spirits of his ancestors, and says : " My fathers, my grandfathers (he calls them by their names) look! To-day my child is leaving me. She enters the wedded life (bukatin). Look at her, accompany her where she will live. May she also found a village, may she have many children (mu nyikan timbeleko), may she be happy, good and just. May she be on good terms with those with whom she will be ". Here it may happen that a brother of the bridegroom will interrupt and say : " Yes, we will live peacefully with her if she does her duty well and does not worry her husband ". The old man goes on with his patriarchal prayer without taking any notice of the interruption and everybody listens quietly and attentively. This prayer which he pronounces with his eyes wide open and in a most natural manner is sometimes very long. When the people have had enough of it and wish him to stop, they send a young man to cut a piece of meat and to put it into the old man's mouth. Thus they " cut " his prayer and he keeps still. The person officiating must be the first to partake of the meat of the sacrifice.

f) The symbolical belt.

The astragalus (nhlolo) of the right leg of the sacrificed goat has been carefully kept. All along the belly they cut a strip of skin reaching as far as the neck and up to the chin, which is cut so as to form a kind of pocket at the end of the strip. The astragalus is put into this pocket and the father ties the belt around the waist of the young woman. He must not look at her face to face in doing this. On the contrary, she must turn her

585 777 825

back to him. This is doubtless done to wish her good luck and so that she may have many descendants. Natives have a special veneration for the astragalus bone which is also used in the divinatory system.

5) The tlhoma, departure of the bride for the conjugal dwelling.

585 If the lobolo business has been duly concluded, the bride will start on the following day for the conjugal dwelling, accompanied by her friends. (1) The next day, she will be joined by the women of her village, who will help her to erect the wood pile (ku koroka shigiyane). They will all go together into the bush to cut a large quantity of branches, and will pile them up between two poles covered with ochre in the bride's village. Each of the husband's relations will take one of these logs during the following months. It is, it seems, a symbolic present from one family to the other.

As for the wood cutters, they take their leave and go home. But what a surprise! Here is the bride going with them! Her sisters are taking her home again! The husband entreats, but in vain! He pursues the woman who, two days before, became his legal wife. To no purpose! He offers her a present to induce her to stay with him. She refuses... This was foreseen ; she must go to her mother to fetch her basket (shihundju), her mat, her spoon and other utensils which make up her small trousseau. A last lesson must also be given to the husband : " If we have given you our daughter, do not believe that we have had enough of her! (hi kolile). She is very precious to us and we take her back! "

Patience! To morrow she will come back accompanied by one young girl only who helps to carry her furniture. This

(1) It is taboo for the bride's parents to keep their daughter in their village when the lobolo has been entirely delivered ; because, should the bride die with them, they would have to return all the cattle, whilst if she dies in the husband's village, the consequences will not be so dreadful (See Part I. Ch. II. C.).

765/292 put strings, made from the same skin, over their breasts. The widow adds new strings when other goats are killed during the mourning visits which will take place later on, and until the adjudication of the inheritance. It is a sign that her husband is dead (a feliwile).

2) The Great Mourning in the Northern clans.

765/783/825/278 The foregoing is the sequence of the rites of the Great Mourning in the Ronga clans. In the Northern clans, according to Viguet, the same elements are found, but in another form.

As soon as the mourning lamentations begin, the grave-diggers send some men to fetch the *tinyele*, which are bits of skin taken from the soles of elephants' feet. These are burnt on charcoal, together with cocks' dung, and the mourners come and inhale the smoke with reeds, when they are tired of wailing. The *tinyele* are considered to be a powerful medicine. It is taboo to eat or even to snuff before having inhaled this smoke.

765/783 That first night, everyone sleeps in the open, and the grave-diggers are not allowed to use their mats. They must cut grass to cover them for fear that their impurity might contaminate the mats. As usual, sexual relations are suspended between married people, but the *bugango* is not taboo in the Northern clans, as girls (psigango) are not wives (basati). When, on the following days, visitors come to the mourning, they go straight to the grave with a small basket of mealies and spread them over it saying. "Go! Die! You have left us." This spreading of mealies is a *mhamba*, an offering. Then the doctor comes. It seems that his operations last only three days. There are no vapour baths properly speaking, but the doctor burns his powders together with bits of bark in broken pots, and all the mourners come and inhale the smoke through reeds, as they did on the first day.

The *purification of the food* is performed by a rite which corresponds with the *lumisa milomo* of the Rongas. The doctor

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

765 782 604 little of it into a glass and raises it to the lips of the old man. "He cuts his prayer" and while all the attention of the public is concentrated upon this act (which belongs also to the ritual, as the priest must be the first to partake of the offering), the wives of the batukulu rush towards the shoulders, lungs and hoofs of the goats and the bottle of wine, seize them and run away towards the west. They have stolen the meat of the sacrifice! At once all stand up and follow them laughing, shouting and pelting them with the *psanyi*, which they had kept for this purpose. The thieves hide themselves behind some bush and eat the meat. Uterine nephews are representatives of the gods, as we shall see later on, and they assert their right by stealing the offering and eating it up.

This ceremony is highly characteristic as it embodies some of the principal ideas of the Thongas in the domain of religion, social life and taboo. It was worth while describing it, and we shall refer to it later on, when dealing with sacrifices and the position of the uterine nephews in the family.

765 292 554 825 The crushing down of the hut is not performed in exactly the same manner amongst the Ba-Ronga. In the clans *South of the Bay*, they only *close* it (pfala yindlu). They dig holes in front of the door, into which they insert poles of the bush called *nhleha*, tying thorny branches horizontally to them. The shield of the deceased is placed against the door. The religious rite then takes place and from the skins of the sacrificed goats strips are cut, which the widows will have to wear *en bandoulière* during the following months of their widowhood. The astragalus bones are kept and hung round the neck. The gall-bladder is also preserved and fixed in the hair of the new master of the village as a sign of his new position.

765 596 In the *district of Makaneta*, on the estuary of the Nkomati, the ceremony comprises two successive acts. First there is also a *provisory closing* of the hut, which can take place one month after the death and is accompanied by the family gathering and the religious ceremony. One year later, when the inheritance is adjudicated, the hut is crushed down, but only if it belonged to a headman of the village and if the kraal is obliged to move in

says: "Nsati wa mabele u nga nabele loko u nge na bukosi." — "Do not covet a woman with large breasts if you have no money..." This does not mean that she will cost more, but her father, knowing that she will not want for suitors, will not consent to let her go unless the full lobolo is paid at once. On the other hand a girl with an elongated face is admired more than one who is too broad-faced. Of the first they say: "She is pretty, she resembles an antelope" (a kota mhala); of the second: "She is chubby-cheeked, she is like a sow." A light complexion is preferred to a very dark one, because the white or yellow races are regarded as superior, and a Native laying claim to any European or Asiatic blood is proud of it. Parents, who also have their say in the question of marriage, insist on two other points; the working capacity of the girl, and the absence of any witchcraft blot in the family. Should her mother have been convicted of being a witch, the girl will be feared. However, every girl finds a husband in the land where polygamy flourishes. If he be slow in coming, she will apply to her doctor, who will prepare the *love charms*, which will make her "appear," so that she will be noticed by the boys (See page 100). If even that does not succeed, she has other means at her disposal and may go herself to make proposals to a man (wopsana). He is seduced by her, and constitutes himself a thief who has *tlhuba*, viz. "taken in marriage by abduction" (See page 119). The parents will claim the lobolo and he must pay it. Marriage and childbearing remain the only carreer to which a Thonga woman can look forward. Hence a number of special feminine taboos which are very curious.

2) Special feminine taboos.

Some of them concern girls *before childbearing* and cease after parturition. In the Tembe and Maputju clans, girls must not eat pork, because pigs root nervously with their noses; the future child would also move its head from one side to the other, when on the verge of birth, and this would make delivery difficult. Other

Other

262 823 784 562 animals are taboo for girls : the *hare* because it is too cunning ; and the antelope *nhlengane*. This antelope raises the foot when it hears a noise ; hence the idea that its leg is hollow and that it perceives the sound through it. The child would do the same, if its mother were to eat the meat of the nhlengane. It would be unable to hear with its ears, only with its hands!

The *legs* of fowls (tibias) are also taboo for all women, because the hen scatters the sand... So are the *hoofs of oxen*, and *pigs' feet*. A woman eating them would walk too much... She would go everywhere to look for husbands!

784 562 824 751 It is taboo for a girl to *walk amongst pumpkin plants* (maranga), to pluck the fruits. She is only allowed to pluck those which can be reached from outside. Were she to transgress this law, she would emit a bad odour, and no boy would court her. Her mother, having no fear of being despised, can walk amongst the pumpkins. A second taboo relative to pumpkins is this : unmarried women must cut a "pumpkin nose" (nhompfu) viz. the end of the stem, and fix it at their waist when plucking the pumpkins, lest they get abcesses in certain regions of their body.

784 262 562 843 It is taboo for them to eat cooked *oxen blood* (bubendje). The following taboos apply also to *married women*. They are not allowed to eat what is called *nkopfu*, viz. some parts of the bowels which are cooked together with the stomach of the ox. "It would spoil the child inside." The *testicles*, which are generally given to the uterine nephew when the meat is distributed according to the laws, and the *underlip* of any animal are also forbidden to them. So is also the *tongue*... because it is reserved for old people as a mark of respect! The *rectum* (gobana) is taboo for women and children. Children might make unseemly noises from the rectum! Women must abstain from *porcupine* and *monkeys' flesh* ; all their offspring would resemble these animals. Such cases have happened, it is said! Women must not eat *eggs* ; they would run a double danger : their child might be born bald and remain so ; or they might be like a hen, which runs in all directions when laying an egg. They would have no peace in child bearing! (See also page 101.)

Nubile girls, during their "tiwheti," must not *approach the*

Nubile girls during their "tiwheti" must approach the
284 oxen *kraal* and look at them. The cattle might suffer, be attacked
825 by a bad cough (mukhulwane), get thin! This taboo is instituted
562 to protect the oxen, not the human inhabitants of the village, as D.
262 Kidd says is the case amongst the Zulus. (Part IV. Ch. I. E.)
[886] When women have passed the time of child-bearing, most of the taboos cease, and they can eat monkeys and porcupine if they wish!

3) The first year of married life.

581 I shall not return to the subject of marriage rites, which have
562 been fully explained in the preceding chapter. Let me say that, though a Thonga woman cannot imagine life without marriage (ku kandja bukati), she does not enter on the new state with any enthusiasm. Her parents have warned her that she will be illtreated, accused of witchcraft and adultery, etc. Her sisters bewail her fate on her wedding day in song. The fact that she has been paid for, though it does not constitute an actual sale, puts her in an inferior position (See Part II).

562 During the first year, she has no *ndangu*, viz. no fire-place of
264 her own. She cooks for her mother-in-law. During the three
585 first weeks the husband eats with her and with the girl who accompanied her to her new home. Afterwards, he goes back to eat with the men. In some places it would seem that the husband eats with her the whole year, until she has her own pot (hlembeto).

4) Husband and wife.

593 What are the relations between husband and wife after the
571 honey-moon? Of course they vary very much according to
517 the character of both. As a rule however, the married people
+ have very little intimacy with each other; the man remains with his companions on the "bandla," the village square where they meet, and only occasionally comes into the "ndangu," the reed enclosure of the fire-place, which is the true domain of the

843 remove the blood. The Thongas think that, as the menses are suspended, the blood accumulates in the body and must be taken away.

Pregnancy is not considered as a tabooed period. As we have just seen, sexual relations are allowed during that time, even recommended as favourable to the growth of the child. However, in view of the impending birth, some special taboos have been added to those which apply to all women.

A pregnant woman *must not drink water when standing up*. She must kneel down, otherwise the water would fall violently on the head of the child and hurt it!

843 It is taboo for her to *wrap her body* in too much clothing.
845 She must keep her belly bare and never throw her dress (kapulane) over her shoulders, lest the baby come to the light with its head covered with membranes, a complication which is very much dreaded by Thonga women.

She must not take *the sauce* of her porridge *too hot*. The child might be scalded inside and have black spots when born.

It is also taboo to *prepare the ntche before the birth*, as no one knows what will happen. The child might die!

843 The future mother must not eat *pigeon's meat*, because pigeons
825 have no blood in the muscles of their breast. She would have no milk herself wherewith to nurse the baby. Nor must she even *look at a monkey*, lest she "take to herself" (tekela) the form of the animal and the child be like it!

A woman, in the beginning of pregnancy, must not visit a sick person. The latter might die.

843 As regards women dying during pregnancy, see page 166.

766 *Miscarriages* are very much feared amongst South Africans,
731 not for themselves, but because they are accompanied by an
789 uncontrolled effusion of a blood which is a terrible taboo. The
826 discharged foetus must be buried in wet soil, otherwise the rain will not fall; the country having been polluted will be dried up by hot winds. A strange rite called *mbelele* is performed in times of drought, when all the graves of children born prematurely and buried on the hill are searched, and their contents thrown into the mud, near the river. We shall discuss in Part VI the

606 these bukoñwana rules would cause death. Yet they are religiously kept as necessary to ensure normal relations between the two families.

We have already seen the taboos which must be observed during the betrothal period (p. 106). Later on, during the gatherings which take place *before marriage*, other taboos are imposed.

606 802 201 584 784 1. In the discussion concerning the lobola, when oxen are counted, the bridegroom's parents must never offer eight head of cattle, because one of them will be killed for the feast, and so eight means only seven. *Seven* is counted by raising, one after the other, the five fingers of the left hand and the thumb and index-finger of the right. In raising the index-finger, they might point it at the bakoñwana, and this would be a mortal offence. To point at anyone with the index-finger is as bad as bewitching him. It is done only in anger, and all the preceding discussions might be nullified if such an imprudence were committed.

2. Should one of the oxen be frightened by the shouts of joy with which the arrival of the herd is greeted and by the sham-fight of the lobola day, and run away home, it is taboo. The ox has seen that something is wrong and has consequently fled. Even should they succeed in bringing it back, "timpfalo ti tjukile," the conscience (or the diaphragm) has been stirred!

584 825 777 784 3. If one of the oxen has no horns (homu ya mhulu), or only abortive horns, psa yila : *bukoñwana byi ta pfumala timpsalu*, viz., the relations with relatives-in-law will have no tenderness, because such an ox moves its head to and fro as it wanders in the night ; it is abnormal. The bride's family will not accept it.

4. Should the lobolo consist of hoes, and should the rain fall on them while they are being carried to the bakoñwana, it is taboo. The lobolo must not be brought in a wet condition, otherwise the new relations will be spoilt (bukoñwana byi ta tshipa) ; the young people will not be able to marry.

5. Do not bring with you tobacco in the leaf when going *bukwen* as a fiancé, bring only ground tobacco, or misfortune will happen. Later on, when you have married your wife, it is allowable.

6. Never eat zebra or reedbuck's meat when staying with your parents-in-law. Should they kill one of these animals while

584 825 777 784 you are there, or on the road, have nothing to do with it. The zebra is *mbalamberi*, an animal of two colours; moreover it has no horns. The same holds good for the giraffe. It has two colours, it has too long bowels. Psa yila! The reedbuck cries: "Dzoo." It is a witch: a mukoñwana must not eat it. For the same reason a sheep without horns is never given to bakoñwana.

7. When you go with women to the parents of your fiancée for a *shirwalo*, viz., to bring them beer, should one of the jugs fall to the ground, psa yila! Return home!

606 609 784 618 825 177 8. From a Thonga of the Maputju country I once heard that it was a great taboo in that district for a man to drink milk with his parents-in-law; let us say rather to *eat* milk, as Natives always take it in its solid form, i. e. curdled. This man was a Christian; he had given up many heathen customs and had gone so far as to partake of milk with his mother-in-law, but, the people all round were very much shocked at his conduct. Pushing my inquiry further, I heard that the milk taboo was observed not only with bakoñwana, but with all the inhabitants of the country who did not belong to one's clan: curdled milk was to be eaten only with people bearing the same family name. In other words, it is forbidden to eat milk *in any village where one can take a wife*. In a very interesting paper published in the *South African Journal of Science*, 1925, p. 481, Mrs A. W. Hoernlé says that this custom is wide-spread amongst many Bantu tribes of Central and South Africa, and explains it by the very intimate relationship which is thought to exist between human beings and cattle. The oxen are one with the clan to which they belong, and only members of that clan can partake of the milk of their cows. I never met with this idea in the other parts of the Thonga tribe, and I may remark that, as the Maputju clan is settled very near to the Zulus and has been more or less "zuluised", this custom might very well have been borrowed from its neighbours. Further researches will show whether the other Thonga clans have preserved what seems to be a very old Bantu idea, or at any rate traces of it. This is quite possible.

584 777 784 9. Do not build a hut for your wife before you have married her. Mankhelu says: "Even if you have plenty of money to lobola, if you make such a blunder your wife will be taken from you.

484 comes to ask for his property! What cunning displayed in confusing the real issue and evading payment! (1)

Travelling consequently plays a great part in the life of these tribes, and it is no wonder that it is subject to many rules and that many taboos must be observed on the road in order to succeed in these expeditions.

I may mention first the four following taboos.

484 A traveller must not *take salt* with him when he goes either to 717 pay a visit, or to hunt, or on a business trip, or else he will not succeed in his object ; he must avoid *sharpening assagais* on the 784 road ; this would rouse his enemies and "awaken thorns" on the path ; he must take care *not to pluck milala leaves*, those used for weaving baskets : it would be an insult to the people on whom he is calling. Let him cut these leaves when returning, or else he will find trouble in the village to which he goes, lamentations, shoutings, disgusting sights. When he finds on the road people occupied in *digging a grave*, he must go at once and help them for a while. If he neglects this duty, he will take upon himself the misfortune (titekela khombo). He will not succeed in his purpose. Should he be in the village when some person dies, he must take part in the purification of the inmates.

825 There are some kinds of animals which bring bad luck to the 717 traveller. In order to "keep the road clean" (basisa ndlela), he 484 must beware of the *mampfana bird*, a kind of crane called "the preventer of the journey" (sibaliyendjo (Ro) shitsinyariendjo (Dj). Should this bird fly across the road, with wide-spread wings, it would be enough to make the party return home : there is danger of death before them and the "mampfana" comes to warn them

609 (1) One day one of my neighbours, named Mandjia, was arranging to start for 484 Bilene to "follow his goods" (landja bukosi) ; he came and requested me to give him a letter. "What for? Your debtors do not know how to read and I do not know anything about your affairs." — "It does not matter," said he. "The important point is that I should have a paper in my hand. They will be afraid. They will think that I come from the White people with their authority." I did not like to refuse a small favour to a neighbour; on the other hand I was somwhat reluctant to help him in a none too moral plan, so I gave him a letter addressed to the Portuguese Intendant of these countries in which I stated that I knew him. It was a kind of pass... What use did he make of it? The fact remains that he came back with his oxen, and I believe the sight of the mysterious paper was not without influence in the transactions which ended in the recovery of his property!

825 777 484 782 that the road is not "clean" (Viguet). The flesh of this bird is used in the preparation of the charms carried by travellers. There are also two mammals which give the same warning : the duyker antelope (mhunti) and the polecat (mangobo). Should a boy going to Johannesburg meet with any of these three animals, he will go to his kokwana (grandfather) and ask him for help ; the old man will then take a mouthful of beer or water and project it towards the traveller (to make "phaa") with the following prayer addressed to the ancestor-gods : "You, so and so, look to this child who wants to travel! Bless him in his journey! May the Spirit of the bush (Shikwembo sha nhoba) remain asleep."

517 461 The *discussion of affairs* (ku khanela timhaka) on the square of the village also fills many an hour in a man's life.

On the whole, men have but little to do. We can fairly estimate at three months the time required for the work which they have to do for the village and for the community. The remaining months are devoted to pastimes and pleasure (1).

III. *Games of adults.*

000 Having already described boys' and girls' games (p. 66 and 172), I now proceed to those of the adults, as forming an important part of the Life of the Village.

462 (1) Much has been said and written about the division of village work between men and women in the Bantu kraal. I shall try to show in the Practical Conclusions, No. V that civilisation is bound to produce great changes in this region. But, as already pointed out, it is certain that to the Natives themselves their system appears perfectly natural and that the women do not at all complain of their fate. The following charming story which is told by a Moravian missionary, The Rev. Th. Bachmann, who lived for a long time amongst the Wa-Nika, between Lake Tanganyika and Nyassa gives fresh proof of this assertion :

000 One day, as the rain was pouring down, I saw Walusangano returning from his garden with his wife, Leya. The wife was walking in front with a big bundle of wood on her head. On the wood was a basket containing maize, cucumbers and beans, as well as the hoe. On her back Leya was carrying her youngest child. The other children followed and the father brought up the rear-guard, carrying only an open umbrella. We were greatly shocked at this sight, and I thought it my duty to intervene on behalf of the women. On Sunday night, at public worship, I spoke of what I had seen in the most expressive terms possible. But my speech did not make the impression I expected. The men looked very much embarrassed ; the women indignant.

The following week, at sunset, I was under my veranda, watching the lightning and

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

names which they also call *seboko*, the same word as shibongo ; but most of these names are names of animals, and are called by the technical term *muthupu*, totem ; the animal is the emblem or totem of the group. The Pedi clans are totemic. This means that, not only do they glorify themselves by comparing themselves with an animal and taking its name, but they think that there is a mysterious vital connection between it and their social group. I cannot give here all the facts I collected amongst them on the subject. They were published in *Le Globe*, the organ of the Geneva Geographical Society, Volume LXIII, under the following title : *Le Totemisme chez les Thongas, les Pédis et les Vendas*. Let me merely mention the following details. The Khahas of the Shiluvane valley have the small grey antelope, called duyker, as totem. They salute each other in these words : "Goni! Phudi!" *Goni* is probably the name of an old ancestor, the same as Nkuna for the Ba-Nkuna ; but *phudi* means duyker. They consider it taboo to make a *ntehe* of its skin for their children. Some of them do not eat the flesh of that antelope, fearing that their children would become idiotic, or be covered with boils. They will not sit near a man of another clan who is handling the skin of a duyker. The Mashilas (Sekukuni's people), who have the porcupine as totem, say : "It is taboo even to tread on its dung ; the soles of the feet would become sore." Many clans are afraid to kill the animal which is their totem ; this is not a law enforced by the chiefs ; the totem itself punishes them if they trangress it. However, nowhere did I find the idea that they are descended from the totem. They say : "The old people noticed that the flesh of such and such an animal made the people of their clan ill ; so they proclaimed it taboo." Amongst the Vendas, or at any rate amongst certain Venda clans (Ba-Laudzi, Ba-Ngwe, Ba-Shidzibe) the totem is connected with the ancestor-gods. At his death, each member of the clan is transformed into the animal venerated by his clan and joins his congeners in the sacred wood where they live.

Nothing of this kind is met with amongst the Thongas. The Thonga clans are *atotemic*. Many men bear the name of animals, but this is merely a means of glorifying themselves ; there is no taboo with regard to the flesh, skin, or dung of that animal. I have

618 539 178 when she goes to the fields, the cat escapes from its kraal, enters the hut, puts on the war ornaments of the husband, dances and sings. Children, attracted by the noise, discover it and inform the master of the village of the strange dancer they have seen... He goes and kills it. At that very moment Titishan falls to the ground, in her garden. She says : "I have been killed at home." She asks her husband to accompany her, with the corpse of the cat wrapped in a mat, to her parents' village. All her relatives attend. They severely reproach their daughter for having insisted on taking the animal. The mat is unrolled and, as soon as they see the dead cat, they all fall lifeless to the ground, one after the other. The Clan-of-the-Cat is destroyed and the husband returns home after having closed the gate of the village with a branch (See Page 323) : "Their life was in the cat."

Folk-tales are very ancient, and this one is by no means unique of its kind. (Compare Jacottet's "Treasury of the Ba-Sutho Lore," Morija 1908, Masilo punished for having eaten zebra's meat.) It shows that the totemic idea existed in former times, in those primitive periods of evolution which some Bantu tribes have now outgrown.

618 178 325 4) A fourth fact tends to show that a mystic relation between an animal and a clan existed in former times. There is, in the north of the Transvaal, a kind of antelope called by the Natives *Shidyanaman*. It is taboo to kill it : "If a Nkuna does so, his family will die during the year, his wife, his children, his own head. Should he kill one by mistake, he must cry with a loud voice and shout : — Yoo! Shana n'ta da na mane! Alack! with whom shall I eat it ?" Mankhelu says it is taboo to eat its flesh, but the taboo is removed by this formula. The Ba-Nkuna do not know how to explain this custom. It may be a relic of former totemic ideas. However Mankhelu does not call the shidyanaman a ntshupu, a totem, and these customs may perhaps be connected with the *nuru* superstition (Comp. Ch. IV and Part IV, hunting customs). But even supposing that the Thongas have gone through the totemic phase, the present clans have entirely forgotten these ancient beliefs.

I: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

643 789 The royal drug, having been burnt, is reduced to powder and this powder is poured into the calabashes. The forked branch is planted in the sacred hut, which I shall shortly describe, and the calabashes hung upon it. Each sub-chief receives a calabash and takes it to his kraal, where it will help the district in which he reigns to perform the *luma* ceremony. But the greater part of the powder remains at the capital. There it will be used not only for the luma, and for the sprinkiing of the warriors (see Chapter IV), but also for two other purposes : 1) for the protection of the country by means of the wooden pegs ; 2) for the filling up of the magical horn.

1) *The wooden pegs* (timhiko). A certain day is fixed for planting the forked branch in the house where the great medicine is kept. Then the doctor, accompanied by some members of the royal family, steals out secretly during the night and goes to the cross-ways, to the strategic points on the borders of the Mazwaya territory. It is taboo for anyone to meet with the party. He plants wooden pegs, and smears them with the powder. As soon as they have been smeared, they become invisible. No one can see them nor tear them out except Godlela. They do not rot. White ants do not attack them. The country is fenced by them.

Should there be any dispute as regards the boundaries of the country, Godhlela will be called. At once the pegs which were invisible appear ; they come out as much as a foot above the ground. If a hostile army was approaching, it will turn back at once, seized with fear at the sight of these pegs.

789 825 787 2) *The magical horn.* The remainder of the powder is mixed with a special kind of honey, the honey made by the small black bee called *mbonga*. This bee makes a large spherical nest deep in the ground. Natives have a number of superstitions regarding it. They say the mbonga honey may be eaten by anybody, but it is only members of certain families who can see the nest and dig for it. For other people it is invisible. (See Part VI.) The Ngwetsa family, in Rikatla, was one of the favoured ones! It must be said that the hole through which the mbonga bees penetrate into the soil is in truth very small and escapes the notice

789 of most people! This honey comes from below. It is a hidden,
823 a mysterious thing. A little of it is added to the drug and the
787 mixture is poured into a double horn, viz., two horns whose large ends are firmly fixed to each other, the point where they meet being carefully covered with dung, which acts as glue. A hole has been made in the upper horn and the drug is introduced through this. It is a great means of divination. When war is imminent, the nyokwekulu begins to ferment, and exudes through the hole : "It knows all about war." So the country can prepare for it. No wonder that this powerful medicine is preserved with superstitious awe and the greatest care.

643 A place of honour is reserved for the magical horn in the
595 hut of the first wife of the chief. In the middle of the hearth
372 a perpetual fire burns ; it must never be allowed to go out ; it
824 is taboo. The wood used for it must be that of a tree found on the sea shore, and called ntjobori. The Makaneta sub-clan must furnish it regularly. It is taboo to take embers from this fireplace, which is called the royal fire, the medicinal fire (ndjilo wa buhosi, wa muri). Should the principal wife let the fire go out, then Godlela must be called on to light it again, rubbing together two sticks of a shrub called ntjopfa. The fire produced by burning this shrub is considered dangerous. It is taboo to cut its branches or to use them for the purpose of warming oneself ; the genitalia are said to swell when this law is transgressed (See Part IV). But Godlela does not fear ; has he not his drugs to protect himself ? He can and must use ntjopfa to re-light the nyokwekulu fire, and he will be given a good reward for his work! The ntjobori, in burning, produces an abundant smoke which leaves a deposit on the horn, on the forked branch and on all the calabashes containing the provision of powder.

643 The queen Mimpanyanhoba who was in charge of the
372 nyokwekulu had no sexual relations with the chief on that account.
595 I do not know if absolute continence is always enforced on the
784 keeper of the sacred fire, as was the case for the Roman Vestal Virgins. But I have been told by Mboza that this woman prevented her co-wives from coming near her hut ; it was taboo.

789 the fat collected in order to mix it with the war medicine, the flesh
726 being left to the dogs to eat and destroy.

In some clans, chiefs possess *other personal charms* which are
643 very much dreaded and called *psitjemba*. So, in the Maluleke
789 clan, each of the children of the ancient chief Mashakadzi received
237 from him one of these psitjemba. It consists of a part of the skull of a child, the top of the head, where the pulse is seen beating at the fontanella. This has been smeared with the vitreous humour taken from the eyes of lions or elephants, and powders made from the skins of wild beasts. The possession of this charm gives the chief a supernatural power. If, being irritated with you, he invokes his gods by sucking it and emits the sacramental tsu, he can call on any wild beast he likes to kill you... He has sacrified with the psitjemba ; you will die!

643 Some chiefs of the Northern clans used to *swallow one of the*
787 *stones* found in the stomach of a crocodile. It is said that
825 crocodiles, when cut open, are found to contain a certain number of stones, as they are supposed to eat one each year, when the rainy season comes on. One of them is chosen and smeared with special medicines and swallowed by the chief. Natives firmly believe that this stone remains in the body of the chief, and that it is "his head, his life" (Viguet). When it is passed in his stools the first time, this is a premonitory warning. When it occurs a second time, it is a clear announcement that the chief is about to die. So chiefs can always know when their time is near. In other clans the crocodile stone is replaced by what is called *ndjalama*. Amongst Nkunas this word designates a kind of bright copper button, which the Pedis of the Palaora mine used to make and sell. But ndjalama also means large sized beads. Whatever it is, some chiefs swallowed the ndjalama and were warned by it of their death. This object, as well as the crocodile stone, is taboo for subjects to swallow. They would die. It is "buloyi bya hosi" — "the magical power of the chief."

643 On account of these powerful and dangerous charms possessed
619 by them, chiefs of different clans regarded it as a taboo to stay in each other's company ; they were afraid lest they might be killed by the magical power of their colleagues. Maphunga

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

643 651 In the Northern clans it seems that these payments in kind called *shirwalo* (carrying of beer, from ku rwala, to carry), are expected from all those who are not hunters and bring no meat to the capital.

643 651 204 825 2. The right of the chief *over wild beasts killed in hunting* is not the same for all game. Rhinoceros is not taxed ; it is even taboo to bring its meat to the chief. On the contrary when a man has killed a wild buffalo, an elan, a giraffe or an antelope, he must first cut some joints for the chief. If it is a panther or a lion, he must give up the skin ; if an elephant, the tusk which scratched the soil when it fell belongs to the chief ; it is "the tusk of the soil," and the chief is "the soil." The other tusk is for the hunter (ndlayi). In the Maputju country, it was even forbidden to kill elephants. Ngwanazi, the chief who was deported in 1896, had reserved the monopoly of elephant hunting for himself and his warriors. The hippopotamus is taxed more heavily than any other beast. The hunter who has succeeded in killing one has not the right of cutting it open. Should he do so, it would be considered a serious offence. He might be put to death. (Mankhelu.) He must at once send word to the capital. and the men of the Court will come immediately and cut up the animal, taking half the joints to the chief. As for the crocodile, it must also be opened by the men of the Court, because it contains many things such as marvellous stones used in magic, and bracelets of the women whom it has devoured. The chief appropriates what he pleases amongst these objects.

643 466 3. *Statute labour* is one of the main revenues of the royal kraal. In some cases, subjects must come to the capital, led by their sub-chiefs, and till a field for the chief or rather for the queen who has been bought with the nation's money. In Nondwane, which is a large country, each of the sub-clans must till a field for the wives of the chief in its own territory. For instance, in each of the districts of Mapulangu, Bandi, Manuel, Maghebeza, Malwan, Hlangunyingin, the chief Mubvesha possessed a royal field which his subjects weeded and harvested every year, and the sub-chief Habele, who was in charge of those districts, had to gather the mealies and carry them to the capital. This official tilling is done

714 held by his chief Mahazule. He approached us, a giant of 6 ft. in height, decked out in a costume which was certainly grotesque, but of which I at once caught the general idea ; he had evidently tried to resemble a wild animal and had succeeded admirably in the attempt. Such is most likely the origin of the war costume in mankind! As for Charley, he was thoroughly delighted to note the terrorising effect produced by his appearance on the youngsters and folk of weak nerves.

He was, admittedly, the handsomest warrior in our locality, and condescended on one occasion to allow us to photograph him, when he explained in detail the several component parts of his costume, which, as a whole, was certainly formidable! The photograph was a failure, but the get-up has remained imprinted on my memory.

714 825 To begin with the top ; the head was decorated with three plumes of long slender feathers, taken from a bird called *sakabonyi*, the widow bird, which is only to be found in the mountains ; sometimes the feathers of other birds are added (magalu, mafukwana); one of these plumes is worn in the centre, the others one on each side, and all three are fixed on to a conical helmet (shintlontlo) trimmed with ostrich feathers. This helmet is set on a kind of toque of another skin, which is held in place by a chin-strap. This style of head gear makes the head look about twice the natural size, and, to give it a still more ferocious appearance, it is adorned here and there with porcupine quills.

714 301 825 Round his neck Charley wore a necklace of plaited thongs of black calf skin (tinkocho). Armlets of long white ox hairs, carefully selected from the tail, ornamented his biceps, and garters of a similar make were on the calves of his legs.

The belt around his loins was very rich, the beautiful skin of a civet cat (nsimba), with its fine yellow stripes, hanging down in front to the middle of his thighs, and small antelopes' skins behind (madjobo ya nhlengane). Finally, to complete the wild animal appearance, calves and ankles were covered with bracelets of large black seeds, which come from the North (timbavu), each seed being as large as a cherry. The size of the legs is thus considerably increased and conveys the idea of a pachyderm ; when he jumped

243 their mealies with the small pimples of their tattooing (tinhleke ta Ba-Ronga). If maize is the most appreciated cereal, it is certainly not the most ancient known to the tribe. Owing to its modernity, no doubt, it is not subject to any taboo. It is sown and harvested [252] without any rite. At Christmas time, when the first cobs are edible, people joyfully feast on the new crop. They cook some of them in the ashes, but they allow the rest to ripen and dry upon [626] the stalks. Although no taboo prevents any owner of a field from eating the first mealies whenever it suits him, Mboza asserts that people who have obtained green mealies before the other inhabitants of the village, do not precede them in the enjoyment of this much appreciated food : "It would cause jealousy amongst them." This reason is perhaps at the bottom of the luma taboo (I, p. 394). Moreover they fear lest they might have to share their good luck with all their friends !

243 Next in importance comes the *mabele*, plur. of bele, dji-ma
273 (Ro.), ñwahuba (Dj.), the *millet* or *Kafir corn*. This is the well-known millet which we give to birds in cages, small, round, blackish grains which grow on a stem 3 to 5 feet high, in elongated cylindrical ears. Kafir corn is pounded, or ground, and may be eaten in the form of flour. But its main use is to provide the 243 yeast for the Kafir beer. As already pointed out (I. p. 42) the 825 mabele is one of the oldest cereals known to the Thongas. It is the ritual cereal, that used for the "shimhimbi," the dish offered to the confined mother or prepared for the luma ceremony. Its seeds undergo a certain treatment before being sown : the sub-chief blows upon them after having taken a small piece of a certain root in his mouth ; this root obtained from a kind of juncus found in the mountains, is supposed to have the power of keeping the ants away from the seeds. He distributes the seeds thus treated amongst his people, and every one mixes some of them with his own supply. Men of the reigning family alone possess 243 this root. Later on, when the time for sowing has come, it is 787 taboo for subjects to precede their chiefs or sub-chiefs in sowing mabele. The bones are consulted. Should the "madjuma" fall showing their mouths (see Part VI), it is the answer of the gods. They say: "Yes ! this is the proper time ! The mabele will do well !"

202 618 crocodiles.) For the Mavundjas: *Kahlamba ntjhaba yo nonoha!* (The big mountain, difficult to climb.) (1)

224 643 825 845 I have already described the part of a slain animal which is to be given to the chief, when speaking of the prerogatives of the master of the country (I. p. 406). Here are some supplementary details: The general idea is that he must receive that part of the body which was in contact with the soil, because the chief is the owner of the soil. In the case of smaller antelopes however he does not claim anything. For the eland he requires, in addition to the ordinary tribute, half of the *bofu* i. e. of the paunch of fat which is found round the heart of this animal and which is believed to possess precious medicinal properties (especially for new-born children born with a membrane round the head). As regards buffaloes and other big animals, should they be killed far away from home, their meat is cut into strips (misha-katsu) and two bundles are brought back to the chief; it is also the rule that the head of any beast of great size should be eaten on the bandla, the meeting-place of the men in the capital.

224 643

Buffalo hunter with his victim.

224 824 So far I have described hunting with assegais, sticks and dogs. But Thongas possess another method of killing big animals, a method which is perhaps more ancient and which has sometimes proved very useful. This is the *marindji trap*, i. e. a large pit dug in the earth, covered with branches and full of pointed stakes upon which the animal falls and impales itself. These stakes are made

(1) The Pedis have the same custom. The Ba-Khaha cry: "Haratsha! Mugoni! We"! This expression comes from the verb *ratsha*, to cross a river on a tree trunk, as the Khaha clan is said to have been held back in its ancient migrations by a swollen river and to have *ratsha* it successfully. The remembrance of this feat of their ancestors has remained and has given rise to this rallying cry. Other Pedis say: *'Sioandja khomo*," viz., "the killer will be given an ox for his reward."

marginal period during which the maphisa must use protective medicines against the dangers of the bush, and keep certain rules. 224 784

As a protection they carry their charms, especially the *ndjao*, the root of a certain juncus which is used on many other occasions. As regards the taboos which they must observe, I will first mention those applying to travellers in general, especially the *salt taboo* (I. p. 339). Should they take salt with them, this would "precede them" (rangela), and they would kill no game. It will be soon enough to look for salt when they have killed. But the great taboo of these hunting trips is the *sexual taboo*. This was already imposed before starting and it must be observed Phroughout the expedition. The necessity of avoiding anything connected with sexual relations is so great that maphisa will take with them to cook their food little boys under marriageable age. What is the reason of this prohibition? I have explained it in dealing with the Thonga idea of sexual relations (I. p. 189). If the hunters transgress the law, the big animals will be so wild that it will be impossible to approach them ; they will furiously attack the men who have sinned, because they know them, and woe upon them! So much so that if the hunters see an elephant or a hippopotamus in obstinate pursuit of one of their number, they will begin to insult him for having spoilt the whole trip by his misbehaviour, and send him home. 224 784 834 825

The law of continence is also binding on *the hunters' wives* at home. It is true that when the absence of their husbands is prolonged for a very long time they may become unfaithful to them and the men, on their return, will find babies waiting for them which are not their true children. This will cause them no unhappiness, as these babies none the less belong to them, their wives having been duly bought, and the time for fear is now passed, as they have returned home safely. The fact that these men welcome the children born during their absence caused me to think that hunters' wives were not subject to the sexual taboo as their husbands are. But further inquiry has shown that this is not true. Old Makhani assured me that incontinence on the part of the wife at home would have as a consequence that the husband would be attacked and killed by wild beasts far away in the desert. 224 784 837 851 752

menstruation, to persons in a state of defilement. This would "spoil their gun." When they go to attend the burial of a relative, they fire a shot upon reaching the mortuary village. Thus the ball which was in the gun at the time of the relative's death will be expelled ; was it not contaminated? Moreover the hunter will wash his gun ; without these precautions the weapon would not kill anything in future. 224 784

These maphisa are very jealous of each other. Some of them try to destroy the power of a rival by securing a part of an animal killed by him ; they subject the meat to a treatment which was not explained to me ; they then bury for instance a bone thus smeared ; after which they are convinced that their rival will no longer be able to dispute game with them. Therefore when a hunter distributes meat to other people, he keeps for himself a little piece of each limb in order to prevent a possible enemy from "going away with his meat." 224 789

Let me now pass in review the *more important kinds of big game*, and I will reproduce as literally as possible the information gathered from Thongas of all parts of the country with regard to each of them. Some of my readers, upon reading these extraordinary statements, will no doubt exclaim: "What does all this mean? Are these actual facts or pure imagination or folklore?" All three elements are certainly represented in these stories, but I think it would be useless to take much trouble to distinguish between the three. My endeavour is not to produce a scientific zoological treatise but to find in these accounts a means of penetrating more deeply into Bantu mentality ; and there is no doubt that the study of hunting rites has a great deal to teach us on this subject. 224

The *eland* (*mhofu*, Oreas canna) is a splendid beast, highly coveted but dangerous to kill. Viguet says : "It possesses the *nuru*. When you kill it, it is taboo to walk round its body. Go straight to its head, and there, in the hair of the forehead, you will find a louse ; take it. Then dig in the earth where the head has fallen : you will find a root tehre ; cut it off and bring it home together with the louse. Then you are safe!" (—Other people add: "Remove its eye before cutting it open, if you wish to escape the 224 825

224 825 danger of nuru.")— "Having reached home, you ask the medicine-man to prepare a charm with the root and the louse : he will *lurulula* you, viz., free you from the *nuru*. Should you omit this treatment you may lose your senses, be unable to find the way home or, when you are back, you may forget everything about your hunting trip. People will say to you : 'U ni nyanyunyu', — 'you are cracked' ; you act as if you had killed an eland and had not been *lurulula*, delivered from its nuru!"

Hunters assert that there is not the slightest doubt about the presence of this root into which the nuru has entered. Even if no tree grows near the spot where the eland has fallen, the root will still be there and the hunter will find it, at least if it is really he who killed the animal. Should another hunter falsely pretend to have killed it and try to claim it, he will never find the root, even if he should dig all over the ground for ten days!

Another rule in connection with the eland is this ; should one of these animals have been killed whilst you were bringing your wife home, you must cut off a piece of its skin and make a bracelet of it, which you tie round your wrist. Then you can eat your meal with your wife. To-morrow go with her to an ant-hill and fix this piece of skin to it with two wooden pegs, one on either side. In the middle between the two pegs, set fire to the skin by means of a burning brand. You are then saved. You have *lurulula* yourselves. If you do not take this precaution, your child will be miserable : it will dry up, viz., be so thin that all its tendons will become visible. — Never let your children eat eland's meat until they have been inoculated with a preventive drug! The danger associated with the eland for the hunter's family is so great that people say : "Married people ought to abstain from killing it and leave it to bachelors." In fact everything connected with this beast is dangerous. When you follow its tracks, if you see that it is tired and that saliva has fallen from its mouth, take care not to tread on it. It is taboo : you will be seized by an irresistible sleep. The reason of these dangers is that the eland has a pouch of fat round its heart called *bufu* (same root as mhofu, the name of the eland). This fat, to which I have already alluded, is a very remarkable substance! Hence all these rules!

On the other hand, should an eland be found dead, transfixed, no nuru need be feared. 224 825

We have already met with the *ndakazi antelope* taboos. Amongst the Nkunas (I. p. 366) this ndakazi, or shidyanaman, must not be killed intentionally lest the hunter and his whole family should shortly die. We have seen how the danger can be avoided when the antelope has been unintentionally killed. The hunter must place his head between his hands, as if in despair, and shout: "Ho! mamana! ndji ta dya na man" i. e. "Alack! my mother! With whom shall I eat it?" By this cry the nuru can be overcome and the possession of the meat assured. Otherwise if a hunter neglects this precaution and comes home with the tail to summon people to help him to carry the eland's meat, they will find that the body of the animal has disappeared.

Clever hunters know a second way of attaining the same end; it is to dig in the soil near the nose (the same as in the case of the eland) and cut off the root you find there: "This root has received the nuru of the animal. When you have finished cutting off the limbs of the ndakazi, you dispose of the dung (psanyi) found in the bowels, handling it with this root. In former times hunters used to throw the limbs in all directions: this would 'spread' (hangalasa) the nuru" (Mankhelu). Amongst the Hlabis, the ndakazi is called *hingakaya*, viz., closing the way home. It is not taboo to kill it, but the hunter must shout, when throwing the assagai: "Kaya! Mawako!" i. e. "May I return home!" If the antelope is swifter than the man and runs away (with a sound like khal) the hunter will be lost in the bush: the animal will have *hinga kaya* viz., closed the way home. It will be necessary to *luvulula* the hunter, whether he has killed the antelope or not.

A third big antelope concerning which tales abound is the *kodoe* (*gantla*, Strepsiceros kudu), which is not uncommon in the Maputju country where I gathered the following information. The man who told me these stories, Movumbi, had a great admiration for the kodoe, whom he called the elephant's brother; he said that the old males had between their horns a green snake which dwells there and warns them when there is any danger threatening them. This snake is their shikwembu (protective

224 825 genius ?) It is taboo to kill one of these old males : the hunter who committed this fault would never kill another kodoe. It is taboo also to kill a young one first ; one must begin with a female ; later on the hunter may try for a male. He must not, however, kill it at once but only wound it ; the kodoe must not fall on the spot ; it must run away and the hunter must follow it for a long time, perhaps two days : "two days, it is all right." Should he find it resting on the ground, he must not shoot it in that position, but whistle in order to make it stand up ; then only he may shoot. The nuru of the kodoe enters a root, as in the case of the eland and the ndakazi. The protective medicine prepared from this root, powdered and mixed with fat, is employed as an ointment beneath the eyes, and behind the ears and the knees in order to "strengthen the bones." This is the lurulula rite in the case of the kodoe. There is also a *luma*, rite of the first mouthful (see later on). It is performed by eating ritually a piece of the muscle which lies between the heart and the lungs, and which is the chief hunters' medicine (p. 60).

There do not seem to be any special laws in regard to the other antelopes except the *duiker* (*mhunti* Cephalophus grimmi). The first duiker killed by a hunter must not be eaten by him ; it must be left for his parents. Should he transgress this rule, "his heart would be disgusted" and he would lose any further interest in hunting. When a duiker falls first into a game pit it is necessary to "blow over it" (huhutela) ; if this precaution is neglected, the pit will not catch anything in future. According to Madyashikulu the operation is performed as follows. The hunter chews a little of the magic root of the kind of juncus called *ndjao* which, as we have already stated, plays a great part in Thonga ritual, and blows pieces of it over the duiker all round its body on both sides, ending with the head ; the aim of the operation would seem to be in some way to collect the nuru which is distributed over the whole body, and to convey it into the head in order to let it come out through the nostrils. If the rite is properly accomplished the game pit will succeed in catching any number of buffaloes, gnus, antelopes, etc., whilst if the precaution is neglected no other animal will be obtained henceforth. In this case the "huhutela" is performed

not so much to prevent an attack of insanity as to guarantee further success in hunting. Should the hunter have killed a duiker after a long pursuit, the dog which started the chase must also be lurulula. The hunter cuts off one of the hoofs of the duiker, makes a notch in the cleft of the hoof and blows the ndjao into it : then he buries the hoof, calls the dog and shows it the place where it has been buried. The dog will then scratch, find the hoof and run away with it. This lurulula will help both the hunter and the dog to become greater adepts in hunting, the dog learning to follow the trail and the hunter identifying himself so much with bush life and bush animals that these will not be afraid of him and he will be able to approach them.

We now pass to the three largest animals of the country, those which could hardly be killed except by the collaboration of a considerable body of men ; they are also the three beasts which are "climbed" i. e. on the carcase of which the hunter climbs to perform the lurulula rite; these are the hippopotamus, the elephant and the rhinoceros.

There are a certain number of herds of *hippopotami* (mpfubu) in the lower part of the Nkomati river, from the Khosen country down to the sea. Natives have noticed that these herds consist of eight to ten females with a single male. When a female is just about to give birth to a young one she emigrates to some lonely creek ; if the young one is a female, she returns with it to the herd ; if it is a male, she leaves it in the creek and joins the herd alone, but comes every day to feed her offspring. Should she take it to the herd at once, the old male would kill it immediately, as the master of a herd is terribly jealous and tolerates no other male near him. The young male grows alone ; when he feels himself strong enough to attempt the venture, he goes to the herd and engages his father in battle ; he will probably be chased away, mauled, half killed ; but he will come again the following years till he succeeds in overcoming the old bull, who will in his turn fly with one of his old faithful females and found a new herd, or perhaps die miserably. These herds always keep to the same region. When a canoe passes through these dangerous spots, the backs of the hippopotami are seen from far off emerging from the

224 825 water, and Natives point to them saying: "The mapseko!" *Pseko* is the name given to old pots employed in connection with the cooking operations (to cook, ku pseka); they are turned upside down in the fire-place and the pots containing the food are placed on top of them. The backs of the hippopotami are like these inverted old black pots and that is why these animals are called after them. It would be dangerous to call them by their own name; they might become angry if they knew that they had been noticed...

224 789 I owe to Mboza a graphic description of the rules of hippopotamus hunting. There are a few villages, near the Nkomati or other rivers, whose inhabitants are regular hippopotamus hunters, and possess the special science, or art, called *butimba*; the hunters themselves are called *batimba*. This science is hereditary: it is taught by the father to his sons. These men possess a peculiar drug, the *mbangulwa*; when the hunter is inoculated with this, he acquires a special power over the hippopotami: should he wound one of them, the beast will not be able to go very far, and it will be possible to follow it and quickly find it. But this inoculation makes the man very dangerous to his fellows: should he beat any one, that person will be at once seized by a disease which will prevent his passing water or stools.

224 835 This is the manner in which these batimba hunt. During the day, the hunter fishes, watching the movements of the hippopotami all the time. When he sees that the propitious moment has come and is ready to undertake hunting operations lasting a month, he first calls his own daughter to his hut and has sexual relations with her. This incestuous act, which is strongly taboo in ordinary life, has made him into a "murderer": he has killed something at home; he has acquired the courage necessary for doing great deeds on the river! Henceforth he will have no sexual relations with his wives during the whole campaign.

224 [789] Before starting he calls his principal wife, the one to whose care the butimba magic drug is committed, and both expose their bodies to the smoke of a medicinal pill. On the same night,

825 791 The reader must certainly have noticed the curious connection established by Mboza between hippopotami and wizards. As we shall see when studying the witchcraft theory, wizards are supposed to have the power of *sending* wild animals to kill their victims. Here the idea is somewhat different. In the three stories which I have collected and of which I give a literal translation, the wizards have become the masters of the hippopotami and ride upon them during the night : they are the maleficent agents who induce these animals to play havoc in the gardens of the people. Two of the stories are supposed to have taken place in the Khosen country, the other lower down on the river, at a spot called Shihahlu. Let us begin with this one.

825 791 539 *First story.* "The wizards put a bit into the mouth of the hippopotamus and climb upon it. You cannot get the animal unless you first get its master. The 'phisa' knows the wizard because he possesses drugs more powerful than those of the wizard. At Shihahlu there was a hippopotamus which ventured to come out of the river even in daylight; it came on to the road and frightened the women passing there who had gone to buy food on account of the famine. They threw away their baskets in fear. The beast used also to go and plunder the fields. The chiefs called a very clever hunter and showed him where the hippopotamus used to come out of the river. This man, who was from Sihhahlu, swallowed his medicine and put on a great many amulets (timfisa) made of varan skin; he also took his tail, the tail of a young hippopotamus, went during the night to that spot and saw the beast ; there was fire on its back ; this fire belongs to the wizard. (Where do these lights come from? I do not know. Perhaps it is the work of the Devil!) The hunter returned home. Another day he went again and heard a noise in the water ; the hippopotamus came out of the river and the hunter saw rings round its ears and bracelets round its legs. He shot it and it died. Then he went to tell the chiefs. They came, and sure enough they found four bracelets on each leg and six rings on each ear. I saw them myself. It had put on all its ornaments ; but it was very thin because it was made to work hard for its master. We went to eat the meat of the hippopotamus which was thus adorned (longile)... During the night cries of mourning were heard on the Lombye rivulet. It was the masters of the hippopotamus who were mourning over it, and the next morning we found pieces of the blue cotton print which

is used by mourners hanging on the reeds where the hippopotamus had been cut open. These people had put them there to mourn their hippopotamus. As regards the hunter, he was given a reward of £ 6." 825 539 791

Second story. "A phisa called Shitjobeke from Matlotlo was called and shown where the hippopotamus used to emerge from the river. He went there during the night and saw its master on its back. He told him: 'So it is your hippopotamus which ravages the gardens. Hold it firm! I am going to kill it.' The wizard answered: 'I beseech you, Khosa, do not kill it; I will not come any more to spoil the mealies!' The hunter let him go and went away. Next evening the animal came out again, its master on its back. The hunter possessed a drug by which he could kindle the lights on the back of the hippopotamus. He saw the wizard and said: 'My friend, now hold it fast. I am firing! If you do not hold it I will kill you.' He fired and the master went away. The hunter remained on the spot fearing that the wizard might come back and ressuscitate it. Next day he told the chiefs to come and cut it open. He performed the lurulula; he blew his ndjao over the legs, the belly, the chest, and the ears; then they turned the beast over on the other side, and he did the same thing. They cut off the tail and gave it to him: the hunter uses this as a medicine; he will mix it with other drugs and this will help him against the wizards; they will no longer be able to come to him during the night and make him dream of hippopotami; it will also give him the power of killing other hippopotami. Then they cooked the meat of the chest, which is a tit-bit. The divinatory bones showed who was to roast it and eat the first mouthful and then distribute their portions to the others. The bones often say also: 'If it is the meat of a male hippopotamus do not eat it in the village, eat it at such and such a place...' [789]

Third story. "There was another hunter, Mundjindji, of the Nyoka clan. His father had been killed by Heaven (lightning), because he possessed charms which he had got from the Ba-Sutho. This man used to dig up the corpses of the dead; he dissected the skin of their foreheads and killed, (with the drugs thus obtained,) the boys who came back from the mines (magaisa). The Commandant (Portuguese Administrator) arrested him, and he was imprisoned in Lourenço Marques. He said: 'They are telling lies about me,' and he was released. However he killed some more people and was imprisoned for one month. Even now he is still doing it. He is a 'phisa.' They called him in to get rid of a hippopotamus which was annoying them. It was the Commandant who called him. He went to hunt it. For many

539 791 825 days he did not see it, but one day, at sunset, he took his canoe and went on to the river. He took a red piece of cotton ; this was reflected at the bottom of the river. The hippopotamus saw it there and came up to see what was the matter. The hunter fired at it ; he fired a second time. And lo! there on its back was the one who rides upon it! One of the balls pierced him whilst the other pierced the hippopotamus. The animal rushed towards the hunter, but he fired a third time and killed it. Next morning they found the hippopotamus floating on the water, dead. In the village also a man had died during the night, and they were mourning there. The hunter had said to the people : 'I have killed a man who was on the hippopotamus.' And on one side of the river people were eating meat whilst on the other side people were crying. But they did not lodge a complaint against him ; no action can be taken in such a case."

224 777 As regards *the elephant (ndlopfu)* it was the favourite object of the chase, because killing one of these large beasts meant not only abundance of meat but also wealth on account of the ivory. Madyashikulu used to bring the tusks to Manukosi (Gungunyana's grandfather) who returned some of them to him, and with the money thus obtained the hunter could buy a wife. There are different systems of lurulula in the case of the elephant. The hunter takes a little of the tintebe powder (the charm of the slayers) pierces the eye of the beast, mixes the vitreum with the powder, adds drugs prepared from the end of the trunk and the tail and uses this mixture to overcome the nuru. A phisa of the Maputju country employed another method. He cut a piece of meat from the foreleg, cooked it, anointed it with powder from the calabash of the slayers, chewed it and began to blow it over the animal after having "climbed it." He then crept over the elephant in the same way as described above in the case of the hippopotamus, holding his gun in his hand the whole time. His comrades used to anoint him with a white medicine round both eyes. When he had returned home the treatment was continued by the administration of two vapour baths (mahungulo). He had to expose his body to the steam produced first by a decoction of various twigs, secondly by another decoction prepared from medicinal roots mixed with pieces of meat taken from a goat and from the elephant

itself. Afterwards he had to drink the broth and eat the meat. 224
The aim of the treatment was to enable him to kill more elephants. 777
In the case of the elephant as well as of the hippopotamus the chief 643
of the country has to perform the lurulula as well as the hunter "because he is the chief of all the animals of the country and he would be unable to govern it successfully if he did not do this."

The *rhinoceros (shibetshana)* is not common in Thongaland ; a 224
few of these animals are found in the extreme south of the Maputju 825
country. The same rules were observed when the hunters had succeeded in killing one ; but this is no easy task because, as Muvumbi said, the rhinoceros is terribly wild, as it has no "mapfalo." The mapfalo is a piece of cartilage which is found in all animals between the ribs, beneath the sternum ; it is the diaphragm ; it is also the seat of fear or of the conscience. It is this particular cartilage which throbs in the case of great fear. The rhinoceros has no mapfalo ; therefore it fears nothing and rushes savagely upon the hunter. Its meat is so delicious that when a man has tasted it he no longer wishes to drink water!

I never heard mention of the lurulula in connection with the 224
lion (*nghala* (Djo.), *ndjau* (Ro.). To avoid being mauled by lions 782
the hunters put into their mouths a little of every kind of food 825
mixed with their powerful drugs and spit it out to the four winds in order to appease the ancestor-gods of the country. Then if they meet with a lion, the wild beast, instead of rushing upon them, will look at them quietly, its saliva dropping from its mouth, and will do them no harm.

Strange to say the *buffalo* (nyari) has no nuru, and when I asked 825
why this was, my Maputju informant told me : "The buffalo is an ox." This answer may perhaps help us to understand something more about the nuru idea.

The statement regarding the *zebra* (mhangwa) is more curious still. "Mhangwa a yi lubiwi! Yi ni mabala ; i nala ; a yi ngeni hosin" viz. "No tax is paid for the zebra ; it is an animal with many colours (stripes) ; it is an enemy ; it must not enter the village of the chief." We have met with the same prohibition in connection with the village of the parents-in-law (I. p. 250).

As regards the *crocodile (ngwenya)* also called *shiwutlani-*

825 *mintjeko*, the one who seizes even the calabashes (he is not satisfied with seizing the woman who goes to the river to draw water, but takes her calabashes also), I heard of a medicine-man in the Rikotjo country who knew the manner of blowing over it (huhutela). There are a number of stories told of crocodiles, for instance the story of a man who was caught by one of these terrible saurians and dragged into a creek where the crocodile intended to eat him later on. The half-dead man came to his senses, saw the sky through the dense reeds in which he had been left by his captor and eventually managed to escape!

There is still a great deal of picturesque Bantu lore to be gathered by listening to hunters telling their stories round the fire when travelling with them through the desert. I will add only two in connection with two smaller animals.

224 825 The *honey-eater*, *shinwabulombane* (Mellivora ratel) is a kind of badger which lives on wild honey. It is said to proceed in the following way. It collects the honey from the hollow trunk where the bees have built their hive and takes it to a little distance. Should you have noticed it preparing its store, do not take the honey at once, but wait till it has finished its work. Then attack it ; this is however very dangerous, because the honey-eater has a special method of defending itself ; it rushes upon its enemy and tries to seize his testicles and tear them out with its claws. The honey-eater does not fear to attack even buffaloes by creeping under their body and serving them in this evil fashion ; afterwards it carefully buries the testicles... The hunter takes a branch of a very hard and thorny mimosa (the nkaya), and so keeps the animal at a distance and pierces it with his assagai. But the honey-eater has the faculty of swelling up and hardening its skin so much that it is very difficult to thrust an assagai through it. When the hunter has succeeded in killing it, the skin must go to the chief.

224 The *ant-eater (mpandana or sambane)* digs large holes in the ground. This is the method used by hunters to kill it. They send their dog into the hole, which is horizontal. The animal is inside, sleeping behind a protective wall of earth ; the dog pierces this wall and attacks it in its retreat. In the mean time the hunter digs a hole from above, some distance in front of the spot where

the ant-eater was sleeping. Attacked by the dog, the sambana begins to burrow deeper into the earth; it reaches the spot where the hunter has dug his hole and tries to escape through this; but seeing that a man is waiting for it there, it suddenly turns back and returns to the opening of its burrow, where it is easily killed, notwithstanding the hard scales which cover its body. 224

Conclusion on the nuru idea and the lurulula rite.

I once asked old Makhani, the hunter who had suffered from an attack of insanity because he had slain an enemy: "What is the nuru?" He burst out laughing, and this was the only answer I could get from him. I suppose an uneducated peasant of any European country would do the same if he were abruptly asked: "What is the soul?" An ethnologist, however, cannot rest satisfied with this avowal of ignorance or this utter want of interest. He must try to find an explanation, and some sort of an explanation is always likely to be found when we are dealing with beliefs which are not purely individual but which belong to a community. 775

The *nuru* (pl. miluru)—to sum up all the above accounts (see also I. p. 478)—is a peculiar power possessed by man and by several wild animals in virtue of which they avenge themselves on the person who has killed them. This power resides in their body and appears to pass out of it through their nostrils with their last breath. The fact of having killed a person or an animal *possessing the nuru* places the slayer in a state of dangerous contamination. It would sometimes appear as if the nuru had entered into him and remained sleeping in him, ready to awake in certain circumstances (I. p. 400). The danger connected with the nuru must be overcome by a special treatment; if this is not done, the nuru will cause an attack of madness and may even do great harm to the family of the slayer or hunter. 769 775 783 825

Let us try to go a step further in our analysis by putting the following question: What is the relation between the *nuru* and the *shikwembu*, first in relation to man, and secondly, as regards animals? 769 775

As regards man, we know that, for the Bantus, every human being at his death turns into a *shikwembu* and becomes an ancestor-god for his descendants and a hostile spirit as regards his former enemies. The shikwembu, roughly speaking, is the ghost of a deceased person. This

769 notion is clearly animistic. The shikwembu, as we shall see in the
775 VIth. Part, is a personal spirit to which prayers are addressed and offerings presented. The *nuru* is not personal. It is a power, an influence, a force of Nature. This is not a distinctly animistic idea. It belongs rather to the domain of Dynamism (See Part VI, Chapter I). Moreover any deceased person becomes a shikwembu, whilst the term nuru is used only in the case of a slain enemy, or in relation to strangers who died in a foreign country and were not properly buried. It is consequently clear that these two words nuru and shikwembu have not the same meaning ; they cannot be employed one for the other.

On the other hand there is a resemblance between the two ideas. Thongas believe that any shikwembu of a hostile tribe, and not only the shikwembu of an enemy slain in battle, can take possession of a man of their tribe and cause a disease very similar to that of the nuru at the outset (although it develops into something very different later on). This disease is a possession in the full sense of the word, and must be treated by exorcism, as we shall see in the Chapter on Possessions. Thus it is also clear that there is a similarity between the action of the nuru and of a hostile shikwembu. In the story told concerning slayers (I. p. 481, Note) we met with a typical case of nuru, ending in a sacrifice offered to the slain enemy. Undoubtedly the two ideas are connected, though not identical.

775 As regards wild beasts, the question does not arise, at least amongst
825 the Thongas. Despite the green snake found between the horns of the Kodoe, which my Maputju informant called its shikwembu, animals do not turn into shikwembu. They have only the nuru.

It would be interesting to know what the ideas of other Bantu tribes on the subject are, and I would urge students of African anthropology to inquire if the root *luru* exists in other Bantu languages and what its significance is. In his book on the *Ila-speaking people*, the Rev. Ed. W. Smith does not mention the exact corresponding term ; but he describes hunting rites which bear a close analogy to those we have met amongst the Thongas. I may mention specially the two following facts (Compare his Vol. I, p. 167 and II, p. 136). 1) When a hunter has killed an elephant and has "climbed" its body, a prayer is addressed to Leza, the Supreme Being, to the ancestral spirits (mizhimo) and to the ghost (muzhimo) of the deceased elephant. These are the words of this last prayer : "O spirit, have you no brothers and fathers who will come to be killed? Go and fetch them!" Here we meet with a tribe

which definitely believes that the animal becomes a shikwembu (muzhimu). 2) When a person commits a murder, the ghost of the deceased takes possession of the murderer, at least temporarily. Possession, amongst the Ba-Ila, is thus directly connected with murder. So far for the Ba-Ila. It is to be hoped that information as to other tribes will throw further light on the problem of the relation between nuru and ghost.

Considering the question only as it involves the Thongas I come to the following provisional conclusion: The nuru idea is no doubt very ancient, dating perhaps from a time when Animism was not yet clearly distinguished from Dynamism, and when man was not even greatly differenciated from the animal. It originated in the instinctive fear which primitive man felt after shedding the blood of his fellow men and of certain particularly redoutable wild animals. This blood must be avenged (Compare the old saying of Genesis IV, 10ᵇ: The voice of thy brother's blood cries unto me from the ground. The vendetta custom which is so wide-spread is a further consequence of this natural feeling). Hence a peculiar remorse and the conviction that purification is necessary to remove the contamination involved or the malediction incurred. This remorse is absent in the case of domestic animals. For this reason the buffalo has no nuru; as my informant said: "The buffalo is an ox." Why does the shedding of ox-blood cause no fear? Probably because oxen are considered as the lawful property of their owner, who has the right of killing them, whilst the men of another tribe and the animals of the bush do not belong to him.

The *lurulula rite* above all is a *protective* rite aimed at the removal of this dangerous nuru. This is proved etymologically by the fact that this verb is a doubly reversive derivative. It comes from the root *luru* to which is added twice the reversive suffix *ula* which means to remove, to take away (Compare my Shangaan Grammar § 208). The blowing over (huhutela), which is a part of the rite, means the same thing. It is a magical proceeding which is often employed in order to combat hostile spirits or influences. But the lurulula has still another meaning for the professional hunters who so eagerly practise it: It is *a means of identification of the hunter with the animal world*, so that he will be able to live in its midst without being noticed and so kill more game. As my Ronga informant says: "By this operation the hunter takes upon himself the defilement of the animal (its smell, its nature) so that the other hippopotami, when they see him, mistake him for one of themselves; this man will therefore have great courage and will not run away when

224 they come to him," For this reason hunters strongly assert that should
775 he neglect to perform the rite he will have no success in his future
783 hunting expeditions. A third aim, at least in the case of hippopotamus-
825 hunting, is to overcome the charms of the wizards who ride upon them.

When studying these old hunting rites I had the impression of living for some hours in close contact with primitive humanity, at a time when man, owing to the elementary character of the weapons at his disposal, was almost on the same level as the wild beast and was obliged to display an enormous amount of courage, skill and endurance in order to assert his domination over the animal world and to make it serve his purposes. Since the discovery of gun powder and modern weapons a new era has set in for the hunter. Did not old Viguet assert that now, when an elephant is killed by means of a gun, the nuru is no longer to be feared? Hunting has become for the Bantu of to-day an amusing sport, more profitable indeed but by no means so interesting!

II. *Psinyama-nyamana. The flesh of small animals.*

136 This word which comes from the well-known Bantu word
262 nyama, meat, is a triple diminutive, obtained by the reduplication of the stem, the prefix *psi*, and the suffix *ana*. It means all kinds of food derived from animals of small size, of which the Thongas are very fond.

Anything in any way resembling meat is welcome to them. Amongst Mammalia they specially enjoy certain kinds of rodents, not the domestic rats, but field mice called maphephe and mabuti which boys catch in their traps. Civet cats (nsimba, yi-tin) and wild cats (goya, dji-ma) are not frequently seen near the villages.

136 As regards birds, they eat them all with the few exceptions
222 which I shall shortly mention, from the tiniest sparrow to ducks
262 and Guinea fowls, which they manage to snare. They have no aversion to the lower types of animal : they collect the *matomane*, large caterpillars belonging to a species of Saturnidae called Cirina similis (Dist), which are found in families on the nkanye tree, during October. By the exercise of a gentle pressure on the hideous creatures, the inside is squeezed out, and the rest is thrown

136 try to fly; but they soon fall to the ground and you see them
222 running towards each other and shedding their slender transparent
262 wings, so that they remain on the spot, like worms, creeping slowly along, unable to defend themselves, an easy prey for the birds and the *shinana* toads, which have a grand feast on the happy day when winged termites appear! Those which happen to emerge where the hole has been dug, try to escape by flying, but are prevented from doing so by the covering of leaves. They at once fall heavily to the bottom and roll into the pot, which may become quite full in a few hours. The owner of the trap then comes and makes a splendid sauce with its contents! This kind of termite is not met with on the Coast.

I cannot enter into details as to all these more or less questionable foods. (See I, p. 65, the mention of the Shitambela beetle.)

262 Although the caterpillars, coleoptera, larvae, and locusts are universally appreciated, there are other "meats" which appeal to certain individuals or clans, but are disdainfully eschewed by others. For instance the boa is eaten with great gusto by the Rongas and disliked by the Nkumas. The same is true of the big varan lizard. The tortoise is generally eaten, but the Mpfumu boys, who esteem themselves more civilised, reject it. On inquiring why some persons or clans exclude certain kinds of meats which other persons or clans consider delectable, we find that there are two different reasons for this, between which it is important to differentiate. The exclusion is due either to a *nyenya*, viz., disgust, or to a *yila*, viz., a taboo.

1) Owing to *disgust*, some people refuse to eat *pork*: "their hearts fear it," probably because pigs are modern and some people are not yet accustomed to eat their flesh. Zulus reject every
262 kind of fish (nhlampfi) from the same feeling of disgust. Snails
777 are despised by all the Thongas; it is true that the snail of the
825 country (Natica Wesseliana) is not very tempting, its shell being of a transparent green and its flesh reddish; moreover it is said to "singita," viz., to bring bad luck to any one meeting with it on the way.

262 But the flesh of some other animals is abstained from, even
826 dreaded, because they *yila*, they are taboo. Thongas have no

totems, and do not exclude certain meats from their diet on account of totemic fears. But they proclaim as taboo some animals: amongst them four kinds of birds, the hawk, the vulture, the crow and the stork, because they are used by magicians to prepare powerful charms; the toad, because when teased its "urine" (murundju) oozes out and is dangerous, causing itch, as is generally believed; a kind of Tenebrionida beetle (Psammodes Bertoloni), called *shifufunu sha paripari*, because it strikes the ground with its abdomen, making a noise represented by the word *baribarr*. I could not discover the particular danger feared by the Natives in connection with this beetle, but there must be one; hence the yila. We have already met with the special feminine taboos as regards food (I. p. 183). Women abstain from certain animals, or parts of animals, fearing an evil effect on parturition. Amongst the Nkunas, women are also afraid of the meat of the leopard, the civet-cat, of any animal with paws (psa marubo); they only eat animals which have hoofs (psa masondjo). "The former are wild beasts, things of the hubo (I. p. 311), with a bad smell, food for men" (Mankhelu).

The comparison of *nyenya* and *yila* is interesting, as it may help to explain the origin of certain taboos, which is a very important subject indeed. The nyenya is the feeling of disgust which induces a person to abstain from a given food; in the yila there is, in addition, the dread of a supposed danger connected with the consumption of this food. Thus there is a great difference between the two: the idea of danger does not exist in the nyenya. However, it is quite possible that what was merely a nyenya has evolved, in the course of time, into a real yila or taboo, in which the disgust is no longer the mere individual repulsion for a distasteful food, but has become a social matter, a characteristic custom of a clan, or of a group.

Let me quote two instances which came under my personal notice. Amongst my servants was a young man belonging to the Ngoni clan. The Ba-Ngoni, being of Zulu origin, do not eat fish. Sometimes the cook put shrimps into the ground nut sauce: this was a treat to all the boys, as they are very fond of shrimps and the addition greatly improved the flavour of the dish. But our Ngoni boy, having smelt the "hlume," used to inquire about the sauce, and if he heard that there

226 651 the fishing is finished, they all sit down and compare their catches. Perhaps an enormous barbel has been caught, "the king of the lake," as these fish sometimes attain a very large size. "Woo! a dle ñhwakwe!" — "Oh! he has killed his mother," say the men, making fun of the fortunate fisherman! But the chief sends an induna who levies the tax. Each fisherman unties one fish from his string and gives it to him.

226 782 The tjeba fishing is practised all over Thongaland, in Ronga territory, where such ponds are numerous in the sandy hollows, amongst the Hlabis, and in the neighbourhood of rivers where there are lagoons which dry up, as far as the Maluleke country. Should there be crocodiles in the pond, which may very well happen when the lake is connected with the Limpopo or the Nkomati, the religious ceremony is more important on account of the danger incurred. Then the bones are thrown and declare who must make the offering in order to secure adequate protection from the ancestor-gods. The officiator enters the lake first, and, plunging his shiranga into the water, says: "If you are here, crocodile, go away! you hyena, do not bite." Amongst the Maluleke, a man of the Ba-Nyai tribe must perform the religious ceremony, as the Ba-Nyai were in the country before the Thongas. He must go first and catch a fish, bring it out alive, and then, surrounded by his fellow Ba-Nyai, offer it to his ancestor-gods. Then he throws it back into the water. The Thonga chief, having ordered his men to keep silence, then makes the following proclamation in a loud voice: "Let the fish abound, and kill them all, but do not bewitch each other!"

226 825 831 The Hlengwes have a very curious custom which I have already explained when discussing the Bantu notion of sexual relations (I. p. 189). When they *tjeba* they take a little boy and a little girl, and lay them down together under a lion's skin, as if they were husband and wife, during all the time that they are fishing. The children keep quiet, — so the fish will also keep quiet and not swim away. When the fishing is concluded, these children are "awakened," and are given a part of the catch: they are praised and thanked, as they are supposed to have secured the fish by their action... or rather by their inaction! This very significant

rite may explain why sexual relations are prohibited during all important hunting and fishing operations. With their magic conception of Nature, Bantus do not separate the domain of man from the animal world ; human actions have their immediate effect amongst animals. So if men and women keep strict control over themselves, hippopotami, fish or elephants will not be so wild, and hunters will have more success!

* * *

Meat is either boiled (pseka), or roasted (wosha). When boiled, the broth is called *muru*, (Ro.) or *sheshebo*, (Dj.) the same name that is given to monkey nut sauce or any other seasoning. When roasted, it is either placed on the embers, or skewered on sticks (lihanga) and exposed to the heat of the fire.

The blood of animals (bubendje) is also eaten by most men. However, many fear it (tshaba), not on account of a yila, as if it were taboo, but rather from individual loathing. There are no special laws to be observed as regards bones. The meat of sacrifices, offered in the funeral rites, must be eaten *on the road*, not in the mortuary nor in the guests' villages, as we have already seen.

Meat is welcome, and eagerly sought after in time of famine (ndlala). Should the October rains fail, or the crops be destroyed by grasshoppers, as has been, alas, frequently the case since the first appearance of these pests in August 1894 (1), the Natives are bereft of every resource (2). They dig up all the edges of the

(1) Just at the commencement of the war between the Natives and the Portuguese, grasshoppers arrived in thick clouds in the district of Lourenço Marques. They had not been seen for a great number of years: old folk only recollected having seen them in bygone times. Since then the scourge has never entirely disappeared. The coincidence of their coming and the beginning of hostilities struck the Blacks very forcibly; they often said, at the sight of the grasshoppers: "They announce the armies of Gungunyane."

(2) Here is a pretty couplet with reference to famine:

Nkondjo wa nhlongana shipopokwana ?

— Lembe ra ndlala a ho nguma kusuhe !

The traces of the little antelope (nhlongana) (which one sees in the desert a long way from its lair) recall the year of famine, when one does not stay near home ; (one must go a long way to search for food). See also the several allusions to the year of famine in *Les Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*, p. 158, 160 et seq.

On their way back, they had carefully to watch a certain bird called *kwati*, fish-eater ; if this bird flew in the right direction, homeward, it was a hopeful sign. If it emitted its cry *kwekweru-kweru*, (kweru means at home), or if it settled on the crown of a hut, then the travellers were happy and shouted their joyful *mikulungwane*. On the contrary, if any member of the company had died on the road, another bird, the *magudjwana*, would come and perch on the crown, with a tired air and drooping head... Then there were tears instead of shouts of joy!

These great commercial expeditions were superseded later on by the *trade in skins* which the Ba-Ronga conducted, bartering them in the interior for powder or other European produce. I knew one Native who organised regular expeditions to Bilene, where he bought the skins of civet-cats with which the Zulu warriors delight to deck themselves. Thence he went into the hill country of the Swazis, or Zulus, to sell his merchandise. It was reported that he obtained scores of oxen in exchange for his precious nsimba skins. The last time, however, the venture did not turn out well, and it has not been attempted again.

Native trade, fifty years ago, consisted also in selling *wax*, and *rubber*, and tons of *nkampfi* (mafureira almonds) to the business houses at Delagoa, (the supply of ivory was exhausted years ago), but this trade has fallen off almost entirely. My impression is that Native commerce has greatly diminished during the last fifty years. So the fact is evident that civilisation, which at first gave a decided stimulus to the commercial spirit of the Thongas, has latterly almost entirely destroyed their trade. How has this been done?

One reason for this decrease in Native commerce may be found in the advent of a large number of Asiatics, Banyans from Goa and Bombay, who are past masters in the art of shopkeeping, and who set up in business wherever they consider there is a sufficient population to warrant the venture. Living very cheaply (rice and curry are their staple food), in any kind of shanty, selling at enormous profits, keen at making bargains, these people

437 787 825 439 439 563

½ D.R., Traders--analyst

rainbow ; he dwells in heaven and the rainbow is his bow. He it is who taught men the use of the bow. 773 821

The two great phenomena which mostly impress South Africans are lightning and rain, and of these you hear wonderful and endless stories!

4) Lightning.

This is called *lihati* (li-tin), and is said to be caused by a bird called *ndlati* (yi-tin). These two words, etymologically speaking, seem to be related to each other. They possess the feminine suffix *ti* which is met with in the forms *eti, ati, oti*. This bird is also called *nkuku wa tilo* amongst the Ba-Ronga, the cock of heaven, or *psele dja tilo*, the hen of h aven, and magicians know how to determine its sex when the bird has fallen. 821 125

The thunder is attributed either to the bird itself or, more frequently, to Heaven. The proper expression for "It thunders" is : "Tilo dji djuma" — "Heaven roars."

In the Northern clans those who practise magical arts add many other particulars to the story, some of which may have been borrowed from the Pedi magicians, who seem to possess a more complete explanation of the phenomenon. According to them, the *ndlati* (Pedi, *dali*) is a bird of four colours, green, red, black and white, which lives in the mountains, by preference at the confluence of rivers. The medicine-men of former times knew its hiding place and had even found the eggs of the bird in a nest floating on the water. When a thunderstorm breaks, the bird flies to heaven into the clouds ; there may be scores of them, but one only will be dangerous (lebya) and cause death. It rushes down to the ground, striking a tree on its way, tearing its bark and its wood, and throwing it down ; or it falls on a hut and burns it, or on a man and kills him. Having reached the soil, the bird can be caught, and I heard people seriously assert that four of these birds, unable to fly away, had been found the previous year in Sikororo country. Or the bird enters the ground, to a depth of two to three feet, and either remains there in its own form, or (this is the most common saying) deposits its urine (murundju), 821 825 795

821 which had caused the flash of lightning, and flies away back to
825 the mountains. The magician who understands the "treatment
791 of Heaven" comes and digs at the spot ; there he finds a kind of gelatinous substance which solidifies after a little time. I possess a little of this curious drug given to me by a Pedi magician, by name Mudjumi ; it resembles a piece of chalk, and is considered very valuable on account of its rareness, and because it is used in the manufacture of the wonderful medicine of Heaven. Should a village have been struck by lightning, the magician of Heaven will come and dig out this foreign body ; if he finds it, the taboo is removed. If he does not, the whole village must move to another place. In the same way, it is taboo to warm oneself at a fire made of the wood of a tree that has been struck by lightning, or to use it as fuel.

821
372

825
778
534
789
824

The flute of Heaven.
Drawn by J. Wawre.

Happily this dreadful bird can be prevented from killing and burning by magical means. Both the Pedi Mudjumi and the Thonga Makasane possessed the enchanted flute, by which they could force Heaven — or the bird of Heaven — to spare them. Mudjumi having sold me his flute, I can describe it at length. It is made of a hollow bone five inches long, covered with Varan skin, filled at its larger extremity with a black substance like wax. Inside, to keep it clean, there is a vulture's feather. The bone is said to have been taken from the ndlati bird ; the wax substance was made from powder obtained by drying up and pulverising a little of the heart, the eye, the bones, the feathers, and the flesh of the bird. In the wax are embedded three seeds of Abrus precatorius, the "lucky bean" well-known in South Africa, a round seed of a splendid coral colour with a black spot, very much used in Thonga magic. This addition of Abrus precatorius intensifies the sound of the flute and enables it to reach heaven.

When travelling through the country, you may come across a tree round which a rag has been tied, evidently for some religious purpose. One's first idea would be that this tree is worshipped, but this is by no means the case. The tree is probably that which the divinatory bones have singled out as the one around which the village should be built, and the offering of this rag is made to the spirits of the ancestors, exactly as is done when the rag is placed near the grave, or at the door of the little hut built on it, in the case of those possessed. (See I. p. 141 and later on Chapter III). The tree is only sacred on account of this association. I have sometimes called the *Nkanye* a sacred tree, and the Thongas call it the king of trees, but it is not so in itself, or in virtue of any Nature spirit dwelling in it ; anybody can cut it without transgressing a taboo ; it is venerated because it provides the tribe with the national beer, and because its branches are used as pillows for the dead and its twigs as *mhamba* in the funeral service (I. p. 138). The religious and social *luma*, to which the bukanyi is subject (I. p. 397), is observed from fear of the ancestral spirits and not because the tree itself is in any way worshipped. In fact I never met with any worship offered to a plant as such.

VI. *The Animal World.*

Plants, *psimili or psa-ku-mila*, things which grow (ku mila), are distinguished from animals, called *psibandjana*, or *psihari*, which are said to *kula*, become great, and not *mila*.

The knowledge possessed by the Thongas with regard to animals is extensive. They give names to all the larger ones, especially, of course, to those which are eaten, but also to some which are smaller, insignificant and useless.

The *Annelida* are called by the generic name of *tinyokana*, diminutive of *nyoka* (yin-tin), snake ; leeches, *ntjundju* (mumi) ; lumbrics, *nhikwa* (yin-tin), both those living in the earth and parasites in the intestines of children.

Amongst *Myriapoda* the Julidese are called *Khongoloti* (dji-ma) ; the Millepedes, *Ndlandlalati* (yin-tin). When one of these has stung a Native, you will see him swallow a little earth, and a

mouthful of water after it, to prevent swelling. "The milleped will die at once and you will not suffer much, because you have been wiser than it (u yi rangelile butlharin)."

The same precaution is taken with regard to Scorpions, *shiphame* (Dj.), *mubalane* (Ro.). Other Arachnida are Spiders (*pume* (dji-ma) *ripe* (dji-ma), Ticks *(shikalana)*, and the Itch *(shinwayana)*, which Thongas know but too well without being aware that it is caused by a microscopic animal. To this group probably belongs the *maroda*, a parasite met with in the huts of Bilen and other remote parts of the country, whose bite causes actual disease.

The *insect world*, so richly represented in Tropical countries (1) is pretty well known, though many of its representatives are of no practical use to the Natives.

Orthoptera. Acridius peregrinus, the locust which ravages the fields, is called *humbi* (yin-tin) in Ronga and *ndjiya* (yin-tin) in Djonga. (See p. 81). The first "clouds" which appeared greatly impressed the Natives when they were seen at the beginning of the war of 1894. I heard some one say that this phenomenon had been foretold by a "mulungwana," a little man fallen from heaven to announce this calamity which threatened the land. (See next Chapter). Other Acridians are called *mhera* (yin-tin); the larvae of locusts, which abound at certain times in the gardens, are the *hondje* (yin-tin). The Pamphygus, a fat, heavy, grey locust, the female apterous, are called *phuphu* (dji-ma). The Grillus is *Shiyendhwa* (shi- psi), and is eaten by some. But the best known Orthoptera are those of the Mantidae family whose representatives are numerous in the country. They are called *Ñwambyevu* (Dj.) or *Ñwambyevulane* (Ro.), viz., the one which cuts the hair, probably on account of its claws, which move like scissors. This insect plays a great part in the superstitions of the Bushmen, who worship it. Amongst the Thongas there is a similar custom; young shepherds, when they meet with a Mantis,

(1) See my publications on the Entomology of Delagoa Bay; I. *Coleoptera*, in collaboration with Dr. Bugnion; II *Orthoptera*, by Dr. A. von Schulthess Rechberg; III *Hemiptera* by Prof. Montandon in the "Bulletin de la Société vaudoise des Sciences Naturelles." XXV, p. 132-220; IV), *Lepidoptera*, "Bulletin de la Société Neuchâteloise des Sciences Naturelles" Tome XXVII, p. 177-250.

tear out a little hair from the skins of their belt and offer it to the insect saying: "Take, Grandfather!" They say that in old times they were looked on as gods (psikwembu), or rather emissaries of the ancestor-gods, just like the little green snakes (Chapter II); their name was Mahulwahulwane, and when one of them entered a hut, no one interfered with it, as it was thought that perhaps some god had come to pay a visit to his descendants. These ideas regarding Mantidae seem to be now disappearing and the offering made to them is merely a little children's game. Another Orthoptera is the *Shipfalapfapfa*, an onomatopoeia, describing a flying locust, and the *Shishirikoko*, a large species which emits saliva through its thorax. When it flies the Thongas say to it: "Go to the place where people eat meat!"

Hemiptera. Bugs are well, too well, known in Thongaland, having taken up their abode in most of the huts, where they are tolerated. They are called *Nsiketi* (yin-tin) and the wild bugs *Nsiketi ya nhoba*, bug of the bush. Lice, *Nhwala* (yin-tin), are regarded as vermin, and often as the result of bewitchment, especially when seen swarming on children. Many Aphidae (grubs) cause an exudation on certain shrubs, a kind of wax, the *Mubodi*, which is used for the manufacture of the black crowns (I, p. 130); others are called *Shibungubungu*, the red ones, probably a kind of cochineal.

Neuroptera. Diptera. The equivalent of these names of flies is *Nhongana* (yin-tin). Mosquitoes are called *Butsuna* and fleas *Butseka*, with the prefix *bu* which here means a collection, a great number. *Busokoti*, a similar word, designates ants. The big gad-flies are the *Bawa* (dji-ma). The Libellulidae are called *Mungutane* (mu-ba) and the Termitideae *Muhlwa* (mu-mi).

Lepidoptera. Butterflies and moths are designated by a single word, *Phaphalati* (Dj. Notice the feminine suffix), or *Phaphatane* (Ro.) (dji-ma), and their caterpillars by the term *Hukwa* (yin-tin) or *Tomane* (dji-ma), this last word especially applying to the large Saturnidae caterpillars which are eaten by the Natives (p. 80). The relation between the caterpillar and the butterfly is not generally known; only once did I find a boy who knew that a certain white cocoon, used as an ornament in dances (p. 102) gave

136 birth to the big green moth with long tails, the Queen Moth. The
815 reason why butterflies, though plentiful in Thongaland, have so little attracted the attention of Natives is, no doubt, the fact that they do not in any way contribute to their food. I have told the story of a woman who tried to force a child to eat a butterfly. (I. p. 445.)

136 *Coleoptera.* The general term for Coleoptera is *Shifufununu*,
826 and it especially applies to the big Tenebrionidae (Psammodes
777 Bertoloni), called *shifufununu sha paripari* (p. 68) and to the large black Carabidae of the Anthia genus which abound on the roads in spring ; one of them, marked with small depressions on the elytra is, for that reason, called the small-pox shifufununu (sha nyedzane). Travelling once with a grown-up Thonga we saw a black Carabida which had four white spots on the back. It was the charming Eccoptoptera mutilloides. I saw him trace a circle round it in the sand saying : "To-day I shall eat to my heart's content!" — "Namunhla ndji ta shura!" — "What are you doing?" I said. — "Oh! This is the *Shurwa-shurwane*," he answered. "When you meet it it is a sign that you will have plenty to eat!" He was mistaken! The real shurwa-shurwane is the Mutilla, a kind of apterous wasp, which has also four white spots on its back, and the beetle we met was so similar to it that he mistook it for a Mutilla ; is it not called mutilloides, pseudo-mutilla? (1)

136 — The Copridæ are called *Gadlen* (dji-ma) and these strange
[753] dung-eaters, which are extremely abundant in the country, are thought to be under the command of the wizards who can introduce
825 them into your body to kill you. The pretty Cerambycidæ,
262 with their long horns, are the *Ñwahomurikotjo*, the ox of Rikotcho, or, according to a truer etymology, the ox with horns bent backwards (kotjeka). Children sing an incantation before them, clapping their hands (I, p. 68). Their big white larvae, the *Shipungwana*, dig channels in the stems of nkanye, nkuhlu, mphesa, etc., and are readily eaten as well as the *Shimhukuta*, the

(1) This custom reminds one of the action of Swiss children when they send the ladybird to heaven, to ask God to give them fine weather to-morrow, or of their saying that crushing a golden Carabus on the road will cause rain to fall. Certain Coleoptera are of good omen everywhere! Only, if in Europe they foretell fine weather, in Africa they announce a good meal. The difference is significant!

136 825 262 larva of a large Calandra which swarms in the stems of the palm trees of the marsh (p. 4). The *Shitambela*, a big Buprestida (Sternocera Orissa) is roasted by the shepherds and eaten after they have torn off its elytra.

136 755 *Hymenoptera*. *Wasps* are called *Mupfi* or *Mupfu* (mu-mi), and are divided into four different classes : the *Mupfu* proper (Belonogaster), the *Tlatlanhongana*, the *Bamaandlopfu*, a grey species, and the *Mumpfundlopfu*, a large black species which burrows in the soil. When someone has been stung by a wasp, the others laugh at him. If he resents being made fun of, they say to him : "Be not angry ; we do this to help you." They are really trying to divert his attention from the pain in order to comfort him. 136 262 815 *Bees* are called *Nyoshi* (yin-tin) and are greatly appreciated for their honey (p. 44). Natives know the males (*djongwe*, dji-ma) the larvae *(shipungwa)*, which they eat with as much pleasure as the honey itself. They call the honeycombs *hahla* (dji-ma) or *shihlenga*, the wax *mumpfu* (mu-mi) and the 136 pollen brought by the bees, *nsindjo*. The curious *Mbonga* (yin-tin) 825 *Bee* is worth special mention, owing to the superstitions which are current regarding it, and the part it plays in certain rites (I. p. 390). This species, which does not sting, digs a narrow passage of two or three feet deep in the soil and excavates a hole of one or two feet broad where it builds its round nest. Natives say that nobody knows what the mbonga does with the earth which it digs out of the cavity in which it makes its nest. No heap of earth is ever seen in the vicinity. The hole is continued under the nest and has no end. It probably extends to subterranean pools where the insects go to drink, — as it is said that no one has ever seen a mbonga drinking from the lake or the well, as the other bees do. Moreover the entrance to a mbonga nest is invisible to the majority of people. It is only certain families who can see it and consequently dig out the precious honey (1). For all these reasons the mbonga is

777 (1) The Libombo family was one of those "which the mbonga loves" (randja). Elias who belongs to it told me that he once paid a visit to one of his neighbours who had just cleaned his village ; he discovered a mbonga hole and said to his friend : "There is a mbonga nest in your village." But the man was unable to find it. Elias then dug as deep as his shoulders and found the nest all surrounded by "calabashes" full of honey. He says that when rain falls the little bees cover the entrance of

136 surrounded with a certain mystery, and this is no doubt why its
825 honey is used in the manufacture of the *nyokwekulu*. Its scientific name is Trigona togoensis, var. Junodi (Friese).

136 Amongst the *Mollusca*, a great many are eaten : the *Mbatsana*
262 (yin-tin) of the sea (bivalve shells), *Likatla* (li-tin) of the lakes,
454 and the *Hwaru* (yi-tin), oysters of the Tembe shore. The land
787 snails are called *Humba* (yi-tin) ; the big ones (Achatina Lamarkiana) are used as safes for the deposit of pounds sterling and are often buried in the huts ; hence the expression *Humba ya bupfundji*, shell of riches! The smaller ones, resembling our snails (Aerope caffra), are rarer and it is considered a bad omen to meet with them on the road. — "Where you go you will hear cries of mourning!" Their name is *Shikumbukwane*. The slugs are called *Holokompfa* (yin-tin) and the smaller snails, *Shihumbanyana*, diminutive of *humba*.

136 *Fish* all have names, but having never dwelt in the close vicinity
825 of the sea, I have not learnt them. I know the *Mfungwe* (yi-tin).
262 the fish whose mouth ends in a saw, the *Mangapfi* (dji-ma), the name of a kind of hawk given to the flying fish of Delagoa Bay, the *Nhempfane* (yi-tin) found in the fresh water ponds, the *Ntima* (yi-tin) the barbel, the black fish which must not be eaten by lovers before their marriage (I, p. 107).

136 *Amphibia*. *Ntlambya* (mu-mi) is the ordinary frog (Rana oxyrhynca) whose young are known and called *Shilungula* ; another black species is the *Rebya* (dji-ma) ; the tree-frogs are called *Shilungwalungwana* (Rappia marmorata and argus) ; the toad *Kele* (dji-ma), Bufo regularis ; the famous Breviceps mossambicus is *Shinana* (I. p. 87) the great warrior of the tales (p. 221).

136 *Reptilia*. There are many kinds of *Lizards*. The common
825 kind found in the houses, under the verandas is the *Mponondjo* (mu-mi) (Mabuia striata), ; the Lygodactylus capensis, found on the hills, is the *Nkolombya* (mu-mi) ; the little Agama

777 the hole with their wings to prevent water from inundating the nest. When it lasts too long they quickly go down to close the entrance of the nest ; the water then leaks down the pipe which descends into the interior of the earth. He added : "If a man does not belong to a family which "knows" the mbonga and if he happens to find a nest he will meet with misfortune ; one of his relatives will die. The bees will bring him ill-luck (singita)."

aculeata, which runs on the sand, *Shipyindji* or *Shihonokamahlo*, the one which gazes at you ; the large gheko, Agama atricollis, with a head of which the grey colour can change into blue, *Galagala* or *Phululu* (dji-ma) (I. p. 173) the grey one, which hides itself in dark places, in hollow stems or under roofs is the *Hokokwana* (dji-ma) (Hemidactylus grenatus) ; it is said that when this lizard sucks at the breast of a human being, it is impossible to remove it, and the only means of getting rid of it is to go and suckle a dog! 136 825

But the most curious lizard of these countries, that which most strikes the Native imagination is the Chameleon (Chameleon Petersii), *Lumpfana* (dji-ma). Herd boys throw ground tobacco into its mouth to avenge themselves for the bad turn it did mankind when it lingered on the road and came too late to bring the message of eternal life (as we shall learn in a moment). It is used by certain magicians to discover thieves. They smear a chameleon with a drug which makes it turn white and then let it go : "Then the thief, wherever he may be, also turns white, and if he does not confess his theft, he dies!" 136 825 789

The flesh of none of these lizards is eaten, but that of the big Varan which lives near the rivers, *Kwahle* (dji-ma), is considered a delicacy. The kwahle is said to be very hard to kill. About *Crocodiles* (*ngwenya*, yin-tin) all sorts of stories are told. When one of them has been killed, the contents of its stomach are carefully preserved ; Thongas assert that each year, when the rains begin, crocodiles swallow a stone, so that their age can be known by counting them. These stones are taboo ; for a subject to swallow them is a cause of death, but one of them is chosen, treated with certain drugs and swallowed by the chief to warn him of his death, as we have already seen (I, p. 393). Crocodile stones play an important part in divination. (See Part VI. Ch. III. D). 136 825 262 787

Tortoises, whose generic name is *Mfutju* (yin-tin), are eaten and also used in the divinatory art, as we shall see. Some lake tortoises are called *Gamba* (dji-ma) and sea tortoises *Hasi* (dji-ma).

Snakes (nyoka, yin-tin) are generally dreaded and considered dangerous, although many kinds are quite harmless. The 825 136

825 *Shipyahla* (Ro.), *Mhiri* (yin-tin, Dj.) is the big, lazy, grey puff adder,
136 which creeps along the ground, and is one of the most venomous kinds, together with the *Mhamba* (yin-tin), a slender species, very swift and often found on trees. "When you meet a mhiri," say the Nkunas, "throw a little earth on it and you will soon see
[752] its brother!" Of course magicians have plenty of drugs to cure snake bites. For this purpose they use the head of the adder roasted and pulverised. *Shibatlankombe*, (Naja nigricollis), "the one which carves a spoon" is the name of a species which
[762] curves its neck till it looks like a spoon. The *Hhlaru* (yin-tin) is the boa. It is eaten. Another member of the Clapidae family is the *Likure*, a pretty greyish violet species (Causus Lichtensteinii).
[769] Amongst the harmless snakes are those little blue ones, *Shihundje* (Dendrophis subcarinatus), which are considered as emissaries of the ancestor spirits. I shall mention them again later on. The *Nsoma* (yin-tin), very common and harmless, is probably Dispholidus typus. Some small ones, not larger than worms, but hard and shining like metal, are called *Tumbi-tumbi*, because they hide (tumba) in the sand. One of them seems to be Xenocalamus bicolor.

825 There are also the legendary snakes of the Thongas. On the
777 Coast they speak of the *Buwumati*, which dwells in the lakes and is invisible. It is only heard crying "bu-wu-bu-wu" when rain is falling, and its voice is as loud as that of an antelope. If it shows itself to a traveller, it is a very bad sign. The story is told of a man who came back from consulting a bone-thrower. He saw the buwumati lying on the ground, its coils extending to a great distance, closing all the passages. He retraced his steps, but after three days he died. In the Transvaal, this dreadful snake is called *Shimhemhemhe*, the name being an imitation of its cry.
825 This superstition is perhaps of Pedi origin, but it has been accepted by the Nkunas. The shimhemhemhe dwells in certain dark woody ravines on the slopes of the Drakensberg mountains. If anyone imprudently penetrates there, the snake pursues him, creeping along the branches above, and bites him on the top of the head. A man met with it once on the way to Thabina; he saw it on the road, its head raised, a shining head of two colours. There

was no end to its body. He tried to avoid it by making a long circuit ; he reached home, but died because he had seen the snake which it is death to see! 825

Birds (Tinyanyana, yin-tin). As I have made no regular collection of birds, I cannot here give the scientific names corresponding to the vernacular ones. These are very numerous, and they are not always the same in the different clans. Here is the list which I made by questioning the pupils of my school who came from all parts of Thongaland : (1) 136

Palmipeda. *Sekwa* (dji-ma) duck. *Sekwanyari*, *Sekwamhala*, *Shikukubi*, (Mal. Kho.). *Ñwafamben* (Mal. Nku.). *Shihlakahlɛka*, *Lingubi* (Mal.). *Shiyankaken*, *Tutwana*, (Mpf. Bil.). *Ngululwana* (yin-tin), (Mpf.).

Long-legged birds. (Tinyanyana ta psikokoko). *Kukolwe* (Mpf. Bil. Mal.). *Munyangana*, *Ñwantjangantjangana* (mu-ba) (Mpf.). *Makhondjwawa*, *Gumba* (dji-ma), *Mayiwabembe*, *Tshebane* (Mal.). *Mugalandlopfu* (Mpf. Mal.) ; *Tshembyana* (Mal.). *Tjololwane* (Mal. Mpf.). *Yindwa*, *Randjane*, (Kho. Mal.). *Ñwamahlanga* (Mpf.). *Mampfana*, or *Shisibaliyendjo* (I. p. 339).

Gallinacea. *Huku*, domestic hen. *Nkuku* (mu-mi cock. *Hwari* (yin-tin) partridge. *Mhangelane* (yin-tin), Guinea fowl. *Shitjatjatja* (Mpf. Nku.). *Nkungu* (Mpf.). *Matjyatjyana* (Nku.). *Teentana*, *or keenkana* (dji-ma), quail, (Mpf.). *Nkwahla*, (Mpf. Kho.). *Hukumati*, (Mpf. Nku.). *Mangoko* (Mal.). *Makokwe*, or *Makwekwe* (Mpf.). *Hlokoyo* (Mal.). *Shibotshe* (Mal.). *Djyedjyedjye*, (Mal.). *Ndjendjenle* (Mal.). *Ndura*, (Nku.). *Ngukulukwana* (Nku.), or *Shitiwitiwi* (Mpf.). *Nkulunkulu* (Mpf. Kho.) a splendid bird, red, green and blue, called the bird of the chiefs, because chiefs used to adorn themselves with its feathers ; it is the Gallirex porphyreolophus.

Pigeons. *Tuba* (dji-ma), pigeon. *Shibambalana*, or *bombokonyi* (Mpf.) ; same as *Mbabawanyi* (Nku. Mal.). *Gororotwana* (Mpf.) corresponds to *Gugurwana* (Mal. Kho.). *Nyakungufe* (Mpf.) corresponds to *Kopolo*, or *Mangobolo* (Nku. Mal.). *Ngalane* or *Shidjwapepe* (Mal.).

(1) Abbrev. Mal. = Maluleke ; Kho. = Khosa, Antioka ; Nku. = Nkuna ; Mpf. = Mpfumo ; Bil. = Bilene ; Spel. = Spelonken.

136 Sparrows. *Mbawulwane* (yin-tin), (Mpf.) or *Mbeulwane* (Kho. Nku.) swallow. *Psikidyana* (Spel. Mal.). *Tinhwana* (Mpf. Bil.). *Tinkata* (Kho.). *Nkapa* (mu-mi) (Mpf.). *Nsongwana*, (Mpf.). *Nhlekwana*, *Tshamatisa*, *Shindjengeletana* (Mpf. Nku.). *Nadwangafolen* (mu-ba) (Mpf.). *Ñwamutjalatana* (mu-ba) (Mpf.). *Lidjadjana*, (Spel. Mal.). *Timhatana* (Mpf.). *Tinhelwa* (Mpf.). *Ngodzi* (Spel. Mal.). *Khwezu*, *Kololwana*, etc., *Sowa* (dji-ma), sparrow.

Creepers, *Gongondjwane*, lit. the one who knocks. *Shitjemahangala* (Mal.). *Munywane* (Mal.). *Ngobo* (Nku). *Hokwe*, *Ndhlazi*, *Nkoro*.

Rapaces. *Gama* (dji-ma) eagle. *Khoti* (dji-ma) vulture. *Shikotana*, *Mangapfi*, *Shimungu*, *Shihununu*, (Mpf.), or *Khukhunu* (Kho. Mal.). *Shikotlwane*, *Hwati*, *Fukwana* (dji-ma). ~~*Manhengana*~~, etc.

Runners. *Yintjya* (yin-tin), ostrich.

825 Some birds are the objects of superstitious ideas. First, the mythical lightning bird whose story has been told p. 313. Then the Mampfana, the one who stops travellers (I. p. 339), and the Nhlalala. The *Nhlalala* is the honey-bird. It is a little sparrow of a greyish colour. When a traveller crosses the uninhabited country, it calls his attention by emitting short and repeated cries ; it jumps from one branch to another and does not rest until it has induced the traveller to follow it. It then leads him to a hollow stem where bees have gathered honey. The fortunate wayfarer can eat to his heart's content and afterwards gives the bird the wax. If he desires to be shown a second tree, he has only to burn the wax : the nhlalala not having had its full share of the treat will lead him to another stem, hoping for another chance ; there is so much honey in the second spot that you will certainly leave some for your kind guide! Such are some of the stories told by a boy named Pikinini about the honey-bird.

224 *Mammalia*. My information, on this subject, is far from complete. One ought to join a Native hunting party, and hear the hunters tell their mighty deeds round the fire in the evening, if one wishes to acquire all their knowledge and learn all their queer ideas about the beasts of the bush, which they have carefully observed, and regarding which a great number of stories are in circulation (p. 63-76).

circulation (p. 63-76). I shall have to content myself with giving the names of some Mammalia and relating some superstitions concerning them. 136

Edentata : two kinds are known, the *Mpandjana* (yin-tin), the ant-bear, which is covered with hair, and the *Kwara* (dji-ma) which has scales. The only Cetacea known is the *Nkomu* (yin-tin), the whale.

Solipedes : *Mangwa* (yin-tin) means zebra, and this term is sometimes applied to horses ; this latter animal is called *Hanshi* (dji-ma), evidently a corruption of the English word. *Mbongolo* (yin-tin), donkey. *Mula* or *Mewula*, mule.

Pachyderma : *Ngulube* (yin-tin), wild boar and also, by extension, domesticated pig. *Mpfubu* (yin-tin), hippopotamus.

Ruminantia : *Homu* (yin-tin), ox. *Nyari* (yin-tin), buffalo. *Hamba* (yin-tin, Ro.), *Nyimpfu* (yin-tin, Dj.), sheep. *Mbuti* (yin-tin), goat. *Mhalamhala* (yin-tin), sable antelope, Hippotragus niger. *Mhala* (yin-tin) (Zulu impala). *Mhunti* (yin-tin), duiker *Hongonyi* (yin-tin), gnu. *Mangulwe* (mu-ba). *Mhetlwa* (yin-tin), water buck. *Nhlangu* (yin-tin), reed buck. *Mhofu* (yin-tin), eland, *Nhutlwa* (yin-tin), giraffe, etc.

Proboscidea : *Ndlopfu* (yin-tin), elephant.

Rodentia : *Mpfundla* (mu-mi), hare, *Nhlolo* (yin-tin), rabbit. *Khondlo* (dj -ma), mouse. *Vondo* (dj -ma), *Phephe* (dj-ma), *Ngole* (yin-tin), etc.

Insectivora : *Shitlulandlela*, mole, lit. the one which crosses the road ; it is a bad omen for a mole to cross your path. *Tjukunyana*, a brownish mole which digs its burrows just below the surface of the ground. Hence the fact that a bracelet made of its skin is employed as medicine against the Filaria, a parasite which makes its way under the skin! 136 777 825 755

Carnivora : *Nsimba* (yin-tin), civet cat. *Shipakane*, cat. *Mbyana* (yin-tin), dog. *Mhisi* (yin-tin), hyena. *Hlolwa*, *Nhlati* (mu-ba), fox. *Yingwe* (yin-tin), leopard. *Ndjau* (Ro.), *nghala* (Dj.), lion, etc. 136

Chiroptera : *Tangadana* (dji-ma, Ro.), *Mangadyana*, (mu-ba. Dj.), bat.

Primates : *Mfene* (yin-tin), baboon. *Habu* (yin-tin), monkey.

826 Monkeys are thought to be degenerate human beings, who have lost the habit of working and tilling fields, and thus fallen into their present miserable condition.

815 192 The collection of Native names of animals which I have compiled is interesting ; first from the linguistic point of view, for purposes of comparison. Bantu philology needs such lists of words on which to base its conclusions. Let me point out that there seems to be a great uniformity in the various South African dialects as regards the names of large animals, the root being the same although the names have been differentiated by the regular phonetic permutations (1) ; names of trees, on the contrary, vary very much, even from one Thonga clan to the other. But these names also interest us as throwing some light on the Bantu conceptions of Nature. The notion of *genus* is not so marked as amongst plants. It is not, however, absent. The different kinds of ducks are called *sekwa*, sekwa-nyari, sekwa-mhala, the word sekwa being a true genus name. The notion of *order* may even be discovered in the classification of mammalia made by Mankhelu when he said : "Women eat only the flesh of animals having *hoofs*, and not that of animals having *paws*" (p. 83).

193 It is curious to inquire to which of the grammatical classes these names belong. Most of them are of the *yin-tin* class, the animal class proper. Torrend makes a connection between the prefix *tin* and the stem *psala*, to beget, to bring forth, and this may be correct. But many are of the *dji-ma* class, which often contains objects forming groups ; animals roaming in companies, as well as the regiments of the army (mabotshu, mabandla, I. p. 456), frequently belong to this class. (Sekwa, duck ; sowa, sparrow ; khoti, vulture ; hanshi, the horse of White people, of the cavalry, etc.). Some mammalia have the personal prefix *ba* for the plural. The mu-ba prefixes are always employed in tales when the animal is personified ; in the few cases here referred to, however, *ba* is used without any idea of personifying the animal ; the bat, the fox and a kind of red antelope (mangulwe) are designated in this way, and I

(1) Compare the names in my list with the Zulu and Nyandja names collected by Miss Werner in the *Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie*. Jan. April 1911.

193 am really unable to give any reason for the fact. A few other names of animals begin with *bu*, the singular prefix in the bu-ma class, which has evidently a collective meaning. *Busuna* is the immense number of mosquitoes which one hears buzzing in the night during the rainy season, whilst one mosquito is *nsuna*, pl. tinsuna; *busukoti* is the crowd of ants swarming in the ants' nest, whilst *nsukoti*, (cl. yin-tin) is one ant, etc.

Phot. A. Burd.

Gebuza, whose nose was torn off by a hyena.

815 Thus, amongst the Bantus, scientific knowledge of animals is still in a very primitive stage and may be compared to that possessed, for instance, by the author of Leviticus.

825 On the other hand, the animal world is not in their eyes so far removed from man as it is with us. Man lives in close connection with the animals, not only when he hunts them and tries to transform himself into "a thing of the bush" (p. 79), but even in ordinary life, and considers them as very similar to himself. For instance, some Thongas believe that animals have a *language*, and try to speak to them. I have already mentioned Pikinini; he was a boy from the Bile country who stayed with me for a time at Shiluvane, having left Bilene after the defeat of Gungunyana. As he

825 was working one day together with some little Pedi boys, I heard him talking volubly. Evidently he did not expect any answer from his helpers, who knew Thonga but imperfectly :

— "What are you saying?" I asked him. — "Oh! I am speaking to the cock." — "What do you mean?" — "I am asking it if it knows what is going on in our country, at Gungunyana. It answers that it does. This cock is a clever cock. It is a man. When cocks do not know what one asks them, they say *hwi* (descriptive adverb meaning to keep quiet)." — "Are there any other beasts to which one can talk?" — "Certainly, those which belong [765] to the village." — "Dogs?" — "No! Pigeons! When someone dies in the village, the headman must go and gather together all the pigeons, giving them some water or some food, and tell them about the death. Then they begin to coo ; they are satisfied to have been informed, treated like people of the home. If this precaution is omitted, the pigeons will leave the village in the afternoon and never return (1). This happened to a Ngoni of Bilen."

Enchanted animals can also speak, for instance a hyena which has been sent by a wizard. In Rikatla there was a man named Gebuza whose face was entirely disfigured, his nose having been torn off by a hyena ; his story was told as follows. Once a hyena entered the village in the early morning when every one was still asleep. It saluted the people saying :

— "Good morning, you people." — "Good morning" answered the people in the hut. — "Give me fire" demanded the hyena. — "Open the door and take an ember" they said. — "No, open it yourselves!" Gebuza opened the door and the hyena seized his nose in its teeth, and bit it off. This is one of the countless wizard stories. With the exception of these instances I do not think the Natives, as a rule, believe that animals have a language, or that men can speak with them. They do not, however, feel

(1) A curious resemblance may be noted here. Amongst French Swiss peasants and in parts of England and of Germany, when the master of the farm dies the bees must be officially informed of the fact, and some one goes to the bee hives and tells them what has happened ; misfortune would otherwise befall them.

themselves so far removed from the animal world as is the case amongst more civilised races. 826

Another point on which Thongas see a resemblance between man and the animal is this : they believe that both possess the nuru (I. p. 478 ; II, p. 77-80). It is true that the nuru is only found in some animals : the eland, the ndakazi antelope, the elephant, the hippopotamus, etc. We shall have to consider this superstition again when dealing with Thonga Animism. 774

Is this idea of identity between man and the animal pushed so far as a belief that men can transform themselves into animals, and vice-versa? It is certain that in tales men are often changed into hyenas, lions, etc. (See Dukuli, *Les Ba-Ronga*, p. 283 and the story of the Ogre Ziniko (p. 256).) But these are purely fictitious. The theory is by no means generally accepted. In the ordinary course of life such transformations would not be considered possible. But they are certainly thoroughly believed in in the domain of magic. Magicians claim that they can fly through the air, with their axes, transform themselves into the lightning bird and so kill their enemy. But it is the wizards (baloyi) who are considered to possess this power par excellence, especially the faculty of changing human beings into beasts to make them work on their behalf. These ideas will be studied in Chapter III. 826 791

I have already mentioned the bird which "stops travellers" (I. p. 339) ; amongst Mammalia a certain Antelope is the object of the same superstitious fear. This is the little red *magulwe* (or *shipene*) whose astragalus bone is employed in divination under the name of malumbi (See Part VI. Letter D). — "When it crosses the road, in front of a travelling party," says Mankhelu, "the leader of the company stops his comrades, goes forward, sits down alone at the spot where the antelope passed, and pours his magical powder into the footprints of the animal. Then he shouts to his companions to come and follow him. Having walked for some time, he takes off all his clothing, and lies down quite naked, as if he were dead. The others continue their march forward. After a while, he jumps to his feet and, making a circuit through the bush, outruns them, without being noticed, and sits down on the road, further on. 825 777

825 They come up to him and wonder how he got there. By this rite
777 he has prevented the misfortune which the antelope would have caused to the travellers."

B. CONCEPTIONS REGARDING MAN.

I. *The origin of man.*

773 While the Thonga mind is very little puzzled by the question of the creation of heaven and earth, the origin of man preoccupies it more deeply. I must now enter into some details as to the story of human origin which has been already mentioned (I. p. 21). It contains two parts : the creation of man and the cause of death.

1) The creation of man.

The first human beings came out of the *lihlanga*, the reed, as some say, or the *nhlanga*, the marsh of reeds, according to others. These two versions seem to answer to two different conceptions. The first is that one man and one woman suddenly came out of one reed, which exploded (baleka), and there they were! According to the second, men of different tribes emerged from a marsh of reeds, each tribe already having its peculiar costume, implements and customs. So when you ask about the origin of the iron hoe amongst the Vendas, who possessed it before the Thongas, you will be told : "The Vendas emerged from the marsh of reeds holding them" (1).

The first man and woman are called in the Northern clans

177 (1) I believe the first version to be the true Thonga one. It may be that the idea that all races came out of the marsh of reeds is an alteration of the primitive conception under Nyai influence. The Ba-Nyai say that all men emerged from a big hole, the hole of Myali or Nwari, in the earth, at a time when stones and rocks were still so soft that foot-prints remained marked on them. It has been supposed that the birth of the reed is simply an allusion to a physiological phenomenon, but I do not believe this.

Gwambe and Dzabana. No special story is told of these ancestors of mankind, but their names are still used under certain circumstances. When expelling a disease, in the *hondlola* rite, the medicine man says: "Go away to Gwambe and Dzabana," an expression used concurrently with this: "Go away to Shiburi and Nkhabelane," viz., to the extremity of the land, a long way off; again, when many tales have been told and folks are going to sleep, these tales are also sent away back to Gwambe and Dzabana (p. 212). Why? Perhaps because they are the old, old people, and the tales which are so ancient belong to them! At any rate, by this kind of incantation story-tellers aim at preventing the hearers' sleep from being disturbed by the remembrance of the marvellous things they have been told. In the legends relating to old migrations the "Road of Gwambe" (1) is mentioned. When the ancient peoples passed along it, the earth was not yet solid, so they left the print of their feet, of their mortars, etc., in the rocks, where they are still to be seen on the edge of a river called Hlantsa-buhlalu. (Nyai idea? I. p. 22.)

In the Ronga clans, these two ancestors of mankind are called *Likalahumba* and *Nsilambowa*. The first name means: the one who brought a glowing cinder in a shell, viz., the originator of fire, (Compare the Hlengwe tradition, I. p. 24). Nsilambowa, the name of the woman, means the one who grinds vegetables. The first human beings, according to these names, were those who

(1) What is the connection between this *Gwambe* and the name of *Ma-Gwamba* commonly given to the Thongas of Spelonken (I. p. 19)? It is difficult to say. According to some, there is still a clan descended from Gwambe, the first man, whose chief calls himself Gwambe. The Ba-Venda, when they saw the Thonga merchants bringing their goods from Delagoa Bay or Inhambane, called them Makwapa, Baluagwana ba Kwapen, the little White people from Kwapa or Gwamba country, viz., those who bring clothes, beads bought from the Whites. It seems certain that there exists a Gwamba clan somewhere in Gazaland, not far from the Chopi border. A story is told of this Gwamba chief, who sent messengers to Modjadji to obtain rain from her. On their return they refused to cooperate in gathering fuel for their fire and died on the road, where their graves are still to be seen. Other informants give a totally different version of the origin of the term Ma-Gwamba: Gwambe was a chief dwelling on the banks of the Olifhant, near the Dunduli village; his men, while on a journey, said to the Vendas: "We people of Gwambe even accept old women," viz., if they receive us well, we call them our wives to please them! Hence the name they were given. Still other explanations might be found and I think there is no real connection between Gwambe, the first man, and the Ma-Gwambe.

773 826 introduced fire and the culinary art into the world! This idea is interesting and seems to show that, to the Native mind, the cooking of food is the pursuit which differentiates man from the animals.

177 773 In the clans of Maluleke and Spelonken there is a third tradition relating to the first man, but it has certainly been borrowed from the Venda or Pedi tribes. They say the first man was *Rivimbi* and his son *Khudjana* (name transformed into Hobyana according to Thonga phonetics). The Thongas only say that Hobyana is the creator of Heaven and Earth and the first ancestor of the race. But the Vendas and Pedis have a number of traditions about these two heroes (1).

2) The cause of death.

773 826 761 When the first human beings emerged from the marsh of reeds, the chief of this marsh sent the Chameleon (Lumpfana) to them, with this message: "Men will die, but they will rise again." The Chameleon started walking slowly, according to his habit. Then the big lizard with the blue head, the Galagala, was sent to tell men: "You shall die and rot." Galagala started with his swift gait and soon passed Lumpfana. He delivered his message, and when Lumpfana arrived with his errand, men said to him: "You are too late. We have already

773 776 177 (1) Here is one of the most curious of these traditions, a strange story indeed, when we reflect that these two personages are the great gods who created the universe! Once, in olden times, Khudjana planted a big pole in the earth, and passed spokes through it, right to the top. Rivimbi having climbed up, Khudjana took out the lower spokes and went home. His father being unable to get down, the son stole the food prepared for him and ate it at his ease. Then he again put the spokes in their places and the old man came home. But when he wished to have his meal, he found that nothing was left. His wife then gave him Khudjana's portion!

There is great confusion amongst these traditions. According to Mankhelu this Rivimbi, or Luvimbi, is the same as the great rain-maker to whose descendants he went to obtain the rain medicine (p. 320). He is not only the creator of the earth, but the protector of all men, who are his sons. So, if some one wishes to harm a man who is not guilty, the Vendas say to him: "Do not kill Luvimbi's man." If you steal a partridge caught in a trap which was not set by you, they say: "Luvimbi, who stands on that tree, sees you." He would seem to be a superior being, a god (shikwembu), even the chief of gods, endowed with omnipresence and omniscience. Moreover there is a relation between Rivimbi and Nwali, the Ba-Nyai god, who is represented either as father or son of Rivimbi, or identical with him. It may be that the Rivimbi tradition, which is both Pedi and Venda and seems to refer definitely to a first ancestor who has become the great god, has been mixed with the Nwali tradition, which is Nyai, so that ideas of different origins have been intermingled.

accepted another message." That is why men are subject to death. 773 825

This myth is so strongly believed that shepherds, when they see a chameleon climbing slowly up a tree, begin to tease it, and, when it opens its mouth, throw a pinch of tobacco into it, and are greatly amused to see the poor thing change colour, passing from green to orange, and from orange to black, in agony, to the great delight of the little boys ; they thus avenge themselves on the chameleon! (p. 339). 761

The same story[1] is told amongst the Zulus, and other myths of a similar character are found all over Africa, especially amongst the Ba-Rotsi (1). It would be an interesting study to collect them all, and thus to compile the African Genesis. We should probably find that the origin of man and death are the two great subjects on which the imagination of the Bantus has tried to throw some light, and that, though the moral element is strangely lacking in these myths, yet there is a striking resemblance between them and the Biblical story, where an answer to the same questions is given. 171 773

II. *The various human races.*

Have Bantus a clear idea of the human race? What they call *banhu* in Thonga, *bantu* in Zulu, evidently means "black people," the first inhabitants of the country. The Zulus are regarded, owing to their military ability, as a superior race, not however to such an extent as they themselves believe to be the case! Whatever may be their hostility or repugnance to their fellow blacks, they know that they belong to the same species. I am not sure that they hold this idea regarding White people, who are not *banhu* but *balungu*. 609 829

What is the origin of this word? As it is also used in Zulu (abelungo), the etymology suggested is the verb *ku lunga*, to be right, good. White people would then be correct, nice people, to

(1) Compare *Fol et Vie*. Oct. 1910. Les Origines. A. Jalla.

[1] about the original cause of death. See p. 350, cat. 116-Analyst]

774 But although Natives locate the psychic faculties in the different
763 organs, they certainly believe in an independent psychic principle, in a *soul*. On this point, however, their ideas are most confused. They call it *moya*, spirit, and in the Ronga clans, *hika*, breath (the plurai mahika, in the expression "ku ba ni mahika," means to be out of breath). This is the vital principle of man, and when a person is dying, his relatives sit near him "waiting for the departure of breath" (langusela ku suka ka hika). "The spirit has gone," — "moya wu sukile," they say, when death has come. They have no theory as regards the way the breath goes out of the body, nor do they stop the nostrils or the mouth to prevent its escape (1).

774 A third name for soul is *ntjhuti* (mu-mi), or *shitjhuti* (Ro.), *ndjuti* (Dj.) *shadow*. It seems to apply more especially to the departed soul rather than to the psychic principle of the living. I have been assured that one cannot dream of the shintjuti of any one still alive, but only if he is dead. The shadow, as such, is not subject to many taboos or superstitious fears. They do not fear to tread on the shadow of a chief, for instance. It may even be questioned if they identify the material shadow with the shitjhuti, the spiritual part of man which separates from his body at death (2). At any rate many think that it is the shitjhuti which becomes shikwembu, the ancestor god.

In former times Thongas feared to look at their own reflection in a pool. They seem to have passed that stage now. The reason was perhaps that they thought their spiritual principle to be

775 (1) A Native of Botshabelo, near Middelburg, Transvaal, asserted in my hearing
826 that in this part of the Sutho nation it was believed that the human soul escaped from the body at death in the form of a Copris beetle. The grave is not filled up with earth until a Copris has been seen in the neighbourhood; and if a hawk appears at the same time the satisfaction is still greater; the beetle has transformed itself into a hawk and the soul has in truth found its way out. Strange to say, when these Ba-Sutho give a patient medicine and see that it has had the desired effect, they say: "It has agreed with the Copris;" whilst if the patient dies they say: "The Copris has refused the medicine."

774 (2) In the following story a direct relation is established between the real shadow and the vital principle. A Ronga magician, Shidzabelana, used to show his supernatural power in the following way: he slept on the ground and ordered a mortar to be placed on his chest and three women to pound mealies in it. This seemed to make no impression on him (a fact which can easily be explained if he was in a state of catalepsy). But it suddenly occurred to one of these women that he had perhaps passed into his shadow, so she hit the shadow with her pestle. The magician at once rose, crying out; he had really left his body and entered into his shadow!

2: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

them. Whatever may be their origin, they form a part of the mental make up of every Native. A careful study of the rites reveals at least three such axioms: Like acts on like and produces like; the part represents the whole and acts on the whole; the spoken wish produces the desired result.

1) *Like acts on like and produces like.* All the elements of Nature are dependent on each other, and if there is a similarity between two of them, they are at once brought into a special relation with each other and begin to influence each other. The application of this principle is universal, in the religious as well as in the dynamistic domain. The Native mind is extremely quick at perceiving a similarity between the most heterogeneous objects or phenomena, and immediately establishes a causal relation between them. We have already met with scores of instances of this law. *Colour* acts on colour; black sheep and black smoke produce a black cloud full of rain (p. 318). *Form* produces a similar form; a necklace of maize grains round the neck of a small-pox patient produces an eruption of small, transparent, pustules which are not dangerous, in place of the large, thick, deadly ones. (See Chapter III. A.) *Disintegration* produces disintegration; the chewing of a bean ensures the melting of the iron ore in the kiln (p. 359). *A certain state of mind* produces a similar condition in living beings, and even in material phenomena; the continence of little children ensures control over the flame of the furnace (p. 115) whilst the passion of married people accelerates disease, and increases the fury of wild beasts, (p. 61) etc. (1)

This kind of magic has been called *imitative magic.* A corollary of this principle is that the image or object representing a thing is in close relation with the thing itself, and any action performed on the image will have its repercussion on the thing represented.

(1) To show how far this action of like on like can go, let me quote this final example which I gave in my paper on *The Magic Conception of Nature amongst Bantus (South African Journal of Science,* Nov. 1920). A magician has had the good luck to discover a crow's nest full of young. He climbs up the tree, and ties all the little birds together by their feet. The mother crow, however, is not at a loss to deliver her progeny. She brings each day a leaf taken from different trees, and places it in the nest. The magician keeps watch. He climbs the tree, looks at the leaf, and recognizes the tree from which it has been taken. He then goes and digs up a piece of root from that tree. After a few days he will have collected quite a bundle of different roots. By that time the little crows will be free, the string which bound them having given way, or having rotted, and the magician will possess a medicine of first rate quality. By means of it he will be able to free any patient from any disease or worry by which he is held fast.

769 with. I never heard it said that the gods were in heaven, not-
776 withstanding the Sutho term badimo, which is believed by some to mean those who are above.

5. Relations between Ancestor-gods and their living descendants.

769 The apparitions of ancestor-gods in a human form in the
776 sacred woods are not of frequent occurrence. The gods reveal
825 themselves to their descendants by other and more common
753 means; first, by their appearance *in the form of animals*, such as the Mantis (p. 335) or more often as little bluish green snakes called *shihundje* (p. 340). These charming and harmless reptiles are frequently seen in the huts, crawling in the thatch of the roof, or along the reeds of the walls (1). Natives never touch them, thinking that they are some of their gods who have come to pay them a visit. It is taboo to kill them. If a disease breaks out in the village the bones may reveal that some one in the hut has hurt the gods, and a sacrifice will be required in order to appease them. They also appear in the form of the large grey puff-adder (shiphyahla) (2).

769 Secondly, the ancestor-gods communicate with the living
776 *in their dreams*. If some one dreams of one of his dead relatives,
787 he is very much frightened, and consults the bones, in order

769 (1) This is the story which I heard from one of my informants of the Khosen
825 country: All his family was once assembled together for a marriage feast. The people were playing on the village square and enjoying themselves. The old women had remained in the hut, and suddenly they saw two little green snakes crawling along the reeds of the wall. They were much afraid, and at once called the headman. He came in, saw the snakes, and said: "Do not fear! These are our ancestor-gods! They have come to share in our feast."

(2) Describing to me a sacrifice at which he officiated either in September or October 1895, the old priest Nkolele told me as a fact the following story, which I will now quote word for word:

"I myself went into the wood with the offering I had prepared for the gods, and then *it* came out. It was a snake; it was the father of Makundju, the Master of the Forest, Mombo-wa-ndlopfu, Elephant's-Face. He came out and circled round all those present. The women rushed away terrified. But he had only come to thank us. He didn't come to bite us. He thanked us saying: 'Thank you! Thank you! So you are still there, my children! You came to load me with presents, and to

to know exactly what the god desires of him (Viguet). If the apparition was painful, if the god came as an enemy, fighting, the dreamer, when he awakes, will take some tobacco, or a small piece of cloth, and hang it somewhere in the reeds of the wall, near the door, as an offering. Or possibly the god has ordered him to give him something to drink. He will then buy a bottle of ginor wine, and pour a little outside the door; whatever remains he will drink with his companions. If the dream takes place during a journey and the ancestor-god seems to be happy, the traveller will throw some tobacco on the ground when he awakes and say: "I had prayed thee to help me on my road; thou hast come indeed! Help me to go further." But if the ancestor-god has an angry look and tells him: "Why do you not give me a piece of calico print? You have forgotten me"—the traveller will fetch a piece and tie it round a tree and say: "When I return home after making money, I will give thee some."

But the great means by which the will of the gods is revealed is the *set of divinatory bones*, which are cast on every occasion, and are called the "Bula," the Word. Does this mean the Word of the gods? Not precisely, but in most cases the diviner thinks he owes his divinatory power to a dead relative, who used to cast lots himself, and who transmitted his spirit of interpretation to him. Whatever may be the real explanation, the fact remains that it is by means of the bones that Thongas believe they know what their gods think and wish, and this is the reason, as we shall

769
776
787

bring me fruit! T'is well!' — He came to thank us for our chicken. Even if one only kills a chicken, he is quite content. For him, it has just the same value as an ox. It was an enormous viper, as thick as my leg, down there (he pointed to his ankle). It came close up to me, and kept quite still, never biting me. I looked at it. It said: 'Thank you! So you are still there, my grandson!'"

— "But," said I to Nkolele, "what you are telling me, is it really fact, or just fancy?"

— "Undoubted fact! These are great truths! After that I prayed, and said: 'Thou, Mombo-wa-Ndlopfu, the Master of this land, thou who hast given it to thy son Makundju; Makundju gave it to his son Hati; Hati gave it to Makhumbi; Makhumbi gave it to Kinini; Kinini gave it to Mikabyana; Mikabyana gave it to Mawatle... ('Mawatle gave it to me, his son' is here understood)... Look upon my offering. Is it not a beautiful one? And here am I, left all alone. If I had not brought this with me, who would have given you anything? Is it not just so? I ask of thee, my ancestor, I ask of thee all the trees; the palm trees for building, the trunks which can be hollowed out for canoes; and let it be that these trunks shall not fall on the people and crush them, when they go to cut them down, even those in the marsh.'"

769
825

845 daha). Striking is frequently one of the rites of aggregation.
184 (See Van Gennep, *Rites de Passage*, p. 55). Let us remember that the Tembe clan is of Northern origin (I. p. 23) and has retained some customs which are different from those of the other Thongas (1).

2) Heaven and the "Nunu."

136 The following is a very extraordinary custom, and one which,
241 in many respects, greatly resembles those I have already described.
845 There is to be found, on the shores of Delagoa Bay, a small
772 Coleoptera belonging to the Alcides genus of the Cucurlionidæ
826 family. It has a proboscis-shaped mouth, a very hard carapace of half a centimetre in length, brown, and marked on each elytron with two longitudinal white bands. The Blacks call it the *nunu*. It is a scourge to the fields of beans and maize (much as cockchafers are with us). In December or January, when these insects begin to swarm, the chief men of the country order the diviners to throw the bones, and send the women to pick the "nunu" off the bean stalks. They gather them in "sala" shells. Then they choose (probably by casting lots) *a woman who has given birth to twins.*

(1) Amongst *the Hereros* a multiple birth is the happiest event which could possibly occur ! The Rev. E. Dannert published in the *Capetown Folklore Journal* an account of the customs practised on such occasions by the Natives of this tribe, which occupies the Western side of Southern Africa, at about the same latitude as the Thongas. The father and mother are condemned to complete silence, under penalty of bringing a curse on those who speak to them. All the members of the tribe are convened and bring their cattle with them. The twins' family has to appear before the whole assembly, and is received with lamentations. Each individual must present himself to the parents, and make them a gift of beads, or other ornaments, in return for which the father and mother purify them by means of a certain powder. After this the father has the right of going from village to village, and claiming an ox from each one, as a kind of ransom. He becomes quite a rich man. This is the *kunga rite*, which we have also met with on many occasions amongst the Thongas (I. p. 124.). How can this diversity between the customs of the Hereros and those of most of the Thongas be explained? No doubt by this vague mysterious idea of Heaven, which is behind the religious conceptions of these tribes and in which all these rites originated. This celestial power, when it manifests itself, stupefies the Natives, for it causes "a death," entails a curse. With the Thongas it is the mother and children who are the objects of this malediction, hence the purifying ceremonies imposed upon them. With the Hereros, it is the whole tribe which is affected. The family into which the twins are born has been distinguished and honoured by this heavenly visitation, and collects for itself the fines which all must pay to regain the celestial favour !

One of her daughters, who is one of the twins, is told to throw the whole "catch" of insects into the neighbouring lake. She is accompanied by a woman of mature age, and, without speaking a word, must go straight to the lake in question. Behind her marches the whole crowd of women, arms, waists and heads covered with grass, carrying branches of the big-leaved manioc, which they wave from side to side, and singing the following song, which has been composed for this occasion : 241 845 772 825

Nunu, muka! Hi da mabele!
Nunu, go away! That we may eat mealies!

The twin throws her little calabash into the water without turning round (for she is not allowed to look behind). Then the savage yells are raised louder than ever, and the women sing their impure songs (ta ku ruketela), which they would never dare to utter on ordinary occasions, and which are reserved for these ceremonies, rain seeking and "nunu" hunting.

On that day, as during the mbelele, woe to the man who walks along the paths! He is pitilessly attacked by these viragos, who push him to one side, or even maltreat him, and none of his fellows will go to his assistance. They all keep out of the way, for they well know what would be in store for them, should they meet the savage crowd! So they mostly stay quietly at home in their huts! 241 772 579 825

The "nunu" is not always thrown into the water. Sometimes, to get rid of the plague, or rather to conjure it away, they start out in a band, armed with sticks, to throw these destructive insects on to neighbouring lands. It would seem that the men are mixed up in these underhand tricks, for it is said that this way of handing over the "nunu" to neighbours, often leads to pitched battles, in which sticks are wielded to some purpose, and blows rain thick and heavy! The people of Rikatla, citizens of Nondwane, used to make a present of their pseudo-cockchafers to the inhabitants of the district of Makunyule, belonging to the Mabota clan. But the true way of conjuring away the "nunu" is to drown them in the lake, and this custom, in common with the preceding ones, certainly has some connection with the notion of Heaven, the appearance of these pests being caused by that mysterious power, which 825 772

2: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

825 772 presides over all unaccountable and unavoidable phenomena of the atmosphere and of the life of the fields, or of human existence.

We have seen how the two sets of religious customs play their part side by side in the rites of rain-making. A similar coincidence may be noticed here. The removal of the "nunu," a rite which originated in the conception of Heaven, corresponds to the sacrifice of the chief in the Maluleke country, who gathers his sons together to pray to his ancestor-gods for the destruction of the vermin (psidi) which eat the mealies and endanger the harvest (p. 404).

3) Heaven, Storms and Robbers.

772 821 789 627 The most characteristic manifestation of Heaven is in the storm. According to the statement of the credulous Natives, after the women have finished cleaning the wells, and have watered the graves of twins, clouds appear, a whirlwind arises, and "Heaven begins to thunder" — "Tilo dji djuma." — I have already described Thonga ideas about thunder and the lightning bird (p. 313), and the powerful charm made from the flesh, feathers and urine of this marvellous creature! There is still another use made of this extraordinary drug. It is a powerful aid in *tracing thieves*! The magician who possesses this powder of Heaven, (Ñwagwalen of Shikhabele in the Mabota clan), when called upon to point out the thief, acts in the following way. Suppose some one finds that some valuable article has disappeared from his hut, he will say to his near relatives, to those whom he suspects of having committed the larceny : "Take care! If you don't confess, we will go to Ñwagwalen, who lives at Shikhabele!" This threat may possibly be sufficient to elicit an avowal. If not, the individual who has been wronged goes to the diviner, and asks his assistance ; the latter takes his "bag of tricks," his drugs, and his big black stick, i. e., the stick which he was carrying when he dug in the earth and found the urine of the bird, or the bird itself. A notch has been made in the stick, to show the depth of the hole in which he has discovered Heaven. Carrying these charms, he goes to find the chief. An audience being granted, he cries aloud : "O Chief! a theft has been

789 stem which has been struck by lightning, i. e. by Heaven ; or the
772 magician will burn branches of the same tree in the garden itself and bring them near to the stalks in order that these may be surrounded by the smoke emanating from them. If a thief enters the ga.den with evil intentions, "Tilo dji ta mu dlaya, i. e. Heaven will kill him."

4) Heaven and the Balungwana.

772 In 1894, as previously stated, locusts, which had not been
825 seen for some fifty years, made their appearance on the shores of
776 Delagoa Bay, and also in Natal and the Transvaal. The popular imagination was, naturally, greatly stirred by this unusual phenomenon, which was at first greeted with smiles and astonishment, but which, later on, was the cause of endless lamentation. I was one day walking up the hill of Lourenço Marques with an old man, the counsellor of one of the sub-chiefs of Tembe, a thoughtful and intelligent person, when he said to me, with great earnestness, in a low voice, as if referring to some important event : "Have you not heard that in Maputju two dwarfs (psimhu-ñwanyana) fell from Heaven ; a little man and a little woman. They came to say to the people : "Do not kill the grasshoppers! They belong to us!" This counsellor only repeated what all thought and were saying in all the native villages ; these grasshoppers, arriving unexpectedly from on high, were a manifestation of Heaven, just like the lightning, rain, twins, or the nunu, and these celestial beings had come to announce it to men.

772 But belief in the existence of *special personages* in Heaven
776 did not originate in connection with these terribly destructive
821 insects. The idea had been familiar, for a long time past, to the Rongas, and probably to all the Thongas. These personages were not only described as dwarfs, but also as balungwana (p. 352). They were said to fall from Heaven at the time of the great rains. Thus, Timoteo Mandlati told me people had seen some of them appear, a long time ago, in the Nkuna country, and that they had gone back to heaven in a cloud ; they live in celestial space, and when it thunders without any rain falling, the Nkunas say :

consider in the choice of his wife is that she should not belong to a family of witches. The accusation: "You are a noyi"[1] is the gravest insult which one man can utter to another (1). 754 [578]

The activity of the baloyi is almost entirely nocturnal. For this reason they are sometimes called by the euphemism: "ba busiku" — "the men of night." In fact, they possess the faculty of getting out of themselves at night time; they have large wings, and, after having left their huts by the crown of grass which covers the top, or by the closed door, they fly through the air and betake themselves to their horrible work.

As they are active in the darkness of night a connection is established between them and nocturnal birds, especially *owls* (kuhunu). When the sinister cry of this bird is heard, men take a torch upon which they have spit out of their mouths a little ndjao powder, and chase away the creature. Baloyi are also identified with the little moving lights sometimes seen in the marshes, the will-o'-the-wisps, the fires of the night (mindjilo ya busiku), the belief being that these fires are either the baloyi themselves, or that they are sent by the baloyi as a threat (2). We have seen (p. 720) that the wizards who ride on hippopotami during the night are credited with the power of producing flames similar to lamps. [825]

Two questions here arise. Does the Native mind imagine that ooo

(1) Thongas are extremely sensitive in regard to a possible suspicion that they are baloyi. When I proposed to my pupils in the Shiluvane Institution that they should move up for the bad season to the sanatorium which we had set up in the mountains, in order to avoid the dangers of fever in the Low Country, not wishing to abandon their comfortable accomodation at the station, they made great difficulties. I therefore said to them: "But if your devoted teacher, Miss So and So, catches the fever, on account of the heat and moisture of the malarial climate, will you not be responsible for whatever may happen?" This remark caused quite a commotion amongst the pupils. "What?" they said. "We are then baloyi! We have the power of killing people by witchcraft!"

(2) One of my informants says: "We are walking peacefully along the path at night-time, chatting pleasantly with our companions. Suddenly a will-o'-the-wisp appears. We at once stop on seeing this terrible object, for one of us must be the culprit. It cannot arise from any other cause. We organise a meeting for confession (rerela nyiwa, see below), and thus rebuke the noyi who is amongst us. Sometimes people who see the fires of the night trample on the ground, take a pinch of earth between their fingers and put it to their mouths (khabuta)." (This may be a kind of "mhamba" similar to that described on page 391, aimed at obtaining protection against the "enemies of the earth.")

[1] [literally "caster of spells" -- See pp. 504 ff., cat. 116-Analyst]

it in half. I take a little of the heart, and of the eyes, I crush the bones, I make a powder with all these ingredients, and this is my great medicine. With one of the bones I make a flute ; I put a little powder into it, and, when a thunderstorm breaks, I go outside without danger and conjure the lightning by playing on my flute, etc." (p. 314).

Mathuza, the magician of Nondwane to whom I have just alluded, was essentially a detector of baloyi. — So was also *Ñwashihandjime*, the great Nkuna magician, a splendid creature, tall, his eyes beaming with a kind of supernatural light. I once saw him, after having performed the "smelling out" rite, point out a woman with the tail he always carried with him, an enormous tail fixed on a handle richly decorated with beads and copper wire. [825] This tail, which is one of the most common attributes of the mungoma, is generally *a gnu tail*. It is said that when a mother gnu has dropped her offspring, she beats it (phyita) with her tail and thus gives the new-born gnu the necessary strength to walk and follow its mother. Hence the peculiar magic use of the gnu tail. In its very middle are hidden certain drugs which possess a revelatory virtue ; the magician puts his nose right amongst the hair before pronouncing his sentence and beating (phyita) the noyi. Ñwashihandjime is said to have disappeared from his village for months, and to have come back from the desert emaciated but full of new magical powers. I once tried to draw his attention to things more spiritual than his art and his drugs. He gazed at me with wild eyes, as if unable to follow my demonstration ; suddenly he emitted a cry very similar to a hiccough and turned his back. [827] (Hiccoughing is a well-known symptom, showing either that one has been bewitched by "mitisa," or that one possesses magical power).

At the station of Shiluvane I once made an inventory of the charms of another Nkuna magician. In his hair the man wore a brass bracelet and some rings, and a necklace with a sixpence attached, all these objects having been inherited from his father, who was himself a mungoma ; moreover he hung round his neck a little piece of the skin of a goat, which had been sacrificed after the death of his father ; in this way he tried to acquire and keep

787 practised the art all his life, and was attached to his divinatory
791 bones by every fibre of his being. His set was the most complete I ever saw, containing as many as 64 objects. He even had two sets, one contained in a leathern basket, the other in a kind of net with small meshes ; the first he called the Father and the second the Son. The Father always remained at home, whilst he took the Son with him on his travels (1). I spent many hours with him, trying fully to understand his teaching, and he took great trouble to initiate me, concealing nothing from me, wondering sometimes at his own readiness to do so, and saying: "This thing I would not have told my own son." I had thus an opportunity of penetrating into the depths of the Bantu mind, which has perhaps invented nothing more elaborate or more typical than this divinatory system. Of course no sensible person would for a moment believe in the objective value of these practices. *Astragalomancy* has no more real value than Cheiromancy, Necromancy and all the other "mancies." But I am obliged to admit that the Thonga system is far more ingenious than any other that I have met with, and that it answers admirably to the wants of the Natives, comprehending all the elements of their life, and photographing them, so to speak, in such a manner that indications and directions can be obtained for all possible cases.

I have explained Spoon's art in detail in "Les Ba-Ronga." I will here confine myself to Mankhelu's revelations, which were more complete, as the old man was one of the masters of the diviner's profession as well as of that of the medicine-man.

1) The objects composing the set of divinatory bones.

787 These may be divided into two kinds : the *bones* properly
825 speaking, most of which are *astragalus bones*, and the various objects which are *not bones*. I shall now enumerate them, always

(1) I heard of another bone-thrower from Tembe who had also two baskets of bones ; the first was called the basket of the chiefs, the second the basket of the subjects ; the first was used in criminal cases to discover wizards : they were bones which "killed," and when they had accomplished their purpose, the diviner left them to rest for a whole week, using in the meantime the second basket. He then washed them, and they were ready to be used again.

giving the Native name of the object, as these names are technical and form quite a special vocabulary which seems to have an archaic character. 787 825

a) Amongst the bones some belong to *domestic animals*, goats and sheep, and consequently represent the *people dwelling in the village* :

Five astragalus of *he-goats* : 1) *Mbulwa*, the astragalus of an old castrated he-goat, the old man. 2) *Mbulwana* (diminutive of mbulwa), a he-goat not so old : men of ripe age. 3) *Shivimbiri*, a non-castrated he-goat : men in their prime. 4) *Shivimbidjana* (diminutive of the preceding), a non-castrated younger he-goat : young men of sixteen to twenty. 5) *Morisana wa timbuti shi-añwa-mafi*, the astragalus of a kid which is still a suckling : little boys, goatherds.

Six astragalus of she-goats : 1) *Gosha nkata wa mbulwa*, the old woman no longer capable of childbearing (1). 2) *Mihlangwana ya bukati, shinyuki sha timbuti*, a ripe woman still at the childbearing age, one who still smears her body with ochre. 3) *Ntibulana* (from tibula, to bring forth a child for the first time, I. p. 192) young married women, having had only one child. 4) *Nhombela*, a she-goat before parturition : girls practising the *gangisa* (I. p. 97), running about during the night but not yet married. 5) *Nhombe-djana* and *nhombedjana yo-añwa-mafi*, little goat and suckling goat : girls still without sexual knowledge, or babies at the breast.

The goats, here as everywhere else, stand for the subjects. The *sheep* indicate the chiefs. There are five astragalus of sheep : 1) *Hamba, nuna wa noni*, a castrated ram, the chief and the old men of the royal family. 2) *Shikwela sha timpfu* or *Khuna ra*

(1) This, like most of the bones, has a long story. When Mankhelu was emprisoned by the old Boer Government for having strangled a pretended wizard (I. p. 444), and condemned to death, a diviner consulted the bones for him, and advised him to draw the image of a Native village on the earth and to pray every day to his ancestor-gods on his mother's side, asserting that they would deliver him, and that, when he returned home, he should sacrifice a goat to them. He added : "If people offer you a cow on the road, refuse." Mankhelu was indeed released, owing to petitions made in his favour, and, on his way home, everybody came to welcome him. In one village, the people wanted to give him a cow, but he refused it. When he reached his kraal, one of the wives of his maternal uncle appeared with twenty jars of beer, five baskets of mealies and three goats. He sacrificed one of these, and the astragalus became the *gosha* of his set... He cannot look at it without a thrill of the heart!

787 825 *timpfu*, a non-castrated ram : the sons of the royal family, the *vóyevelo* (bana ba-ku-psalwa). 3) Another *Shikwela*, astragalus of the ram sacrified during the Sikororo war, the one whose psanyi was used for the sprinkling of the Nkuna army ; it designates the enemy, and is watched with special attention when casting the bones in connection with military affairs. 4) *Noni wa timpfu*, an old sheep, the widow of the chief. 5) *Nhombela ya timpfu*, a young sheep, the girls of the royal family. As regards the wife of the chief, she is represented by the astragalus of the female mhala antelope.

787 177 771 In one of his sets of bones Mankhelu also had two objects taken *from an ox*. One was an oval-shaped smooth bone, two inches long, the other, one of its hoofs decorated on one of its three sides with triangular marks (See plate). Both represent the *Nkuna* tribe, whose totem is the buffalo. (Comp. I. p. 364.) But this is a custom borrowed from the Sutho-Pedis. I never saw bones corresponding to totems used in Thonga divination ; the idea of totem is altogether absent from the minds of the Thongas when not influenced by their Pedi neighbours.

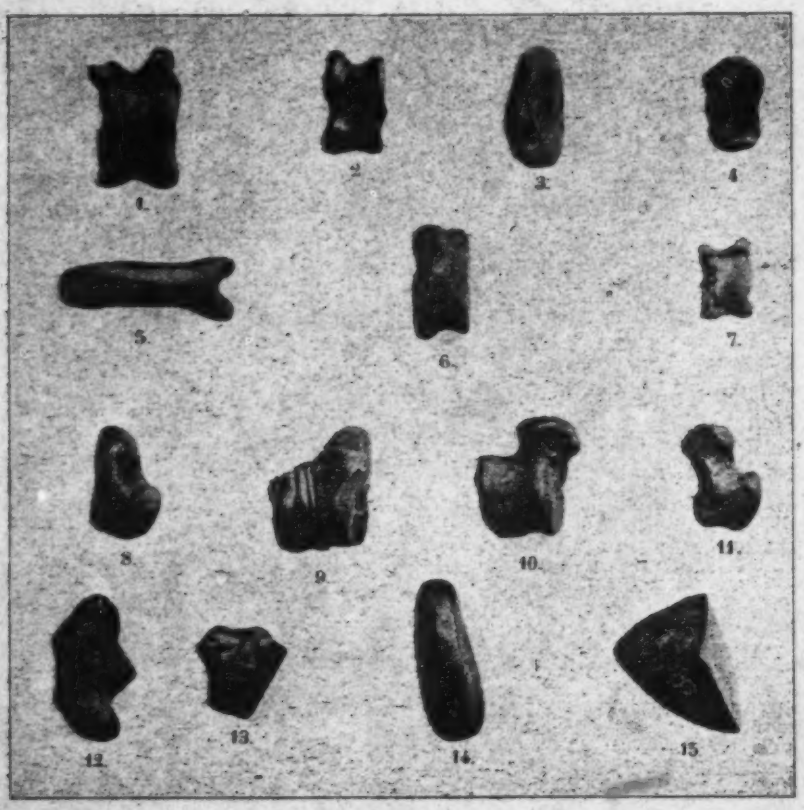
787 825 In addition to those of the domestic animals, there are a number of astragalus, or other bones, taken from *wild animals*.

First from *antelopes* : the male *mhala*, *tsombe ra mhala*, means the chief, and the female mhala, his wife ; the male mhunti, *tsombe ra mhunti*, *mhunti ya matlhari*, the duiker of the weapons, means fighting men, and the female mhunti, called *mbiri*, means women of loose character : *mbiri ya ku tola, ñwashifamba ni mafura eku rimen*, the woman who smears herself with grease and ochre, even when she goes to her field (thus trying to attract the attention of men). The *nhlangu* (reed buck), wandering about during the night, means wizards, as these cast their spells by night. Mankhelu had only the astragalus of the female in his set. The *mbalala* antelope dwells in the forest ; it does not like to come out in the plains ; its astragalus therefore designates the chief who rests in his hut and does not expose himself to the toil and the heat of the day.

The astragalus of the *ngolube ya ku dya marambo, yi tjela mitshi yi ralarala, yi languta hi matlhelo*, the wild boar which eats bones,

787 which digs holes, which looks about on all sides, is the medicine-
835 man who searches for roots to prepare his drugs. The female wild pig is the medicine man's wife.

Three astragalus of a very different form come from *baboons*, *numa wa mfene*, the male baboon, *nsati wa mfene*, the female



Objects specially worthy of note in Mankhelu's set of divinatory bones.

1. Mhala antelope ♂. +. 2. Ram —. 3. Mhala antelope ♂×. 4. Reed buck ♀:. 5. Phalanx of a Lion +. 6. Astragalus found in the dejecta of a hyena: Ancestor-god. 7. Malumbi +. 8. Ant-bear +. 9. Hyena +. 10. Leopard +. 11. Baboon +: 12. Kanye stone +. 13. Kanye: part of twig +. 14. Ox. 15. Ox hoof.

baboon, *nhombela ya mfene*, the young baboon. They symbolise the *village*, because baboons never move from their chosen spot. "You never see the ruins of their habitations; though men may

787 build in their neighbourhood, these apes do not leave permanently,
825 you will see them coming back again next spring."

The following bones are asexual. There is only one of each kind in the set and it is not indicated whether it is male or female : the phalanx of a *lion* (ndjao), either male or female, taken either from the fore leg or from the hind leg, either on the left or on the right side. The lion is the chief of wild animals, so its phalanx represents the chief of the tribe, par excellence. It also designates White people, who are regarded as being as rich as kings! The astragalus of the *leopard, yingwe, shidya mafura*, the beast which eats fat and eats no grass, is also alone of its kind, the male only being taken ; it represents those who can choose their food, the rich, not the poor and wretched, "the chiefs and you White people," says Mankhelu! The *hyena, mhisi*, stands for the counsellors, the sycophants, the parasites ; they resemble the hyena, which follows the lion and the panther to eat the remains of their feasts, crunching the bones of a prey which it was not strong enough to kill! But the astragalus of the hyena also represents the wizards, because they eat the flesh of people whom they steal ; the ancestor-gods, because the hyena remains hidden in its hole during the day, like the psikwembu in their graves ; the chief himself, in as much as the chief also "eats" his subjects, and you cannot follow him and recover your property any more than you can a hyena!

The astragalus of the *ant-bear* (mhandjela), which digs the holes in which porcupines live, has also many meanings : the ancestor-gods, because they dwell in the earth and never come out in the day-time ; the power of death, because it digs the grave ; the chief himself, because ant-bears eat earth, and the chief also puts it to his mouth when sacrificing. He has the right to do so, when saying *tsu*, because the earth is his ; it belonged to his ancestors before him and he calls to them by its means (I. p. 405). Spoon used one of the claws of the ant-bear, instead of its astragalus.

A very curious bone is the one called *Shikwembu*, ancestor-god. It is a mhala astragalus found in the excrement of a hyena ; a most uncommon discovery, made by Mankhelu when on his way to Swaziland. The bone is worn down : it has evidently been bitten

2: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

by sharp teeth. I have explained (p. 376) how fittingly this bone was chosen to represent the spirits of the departed. They also have been swallowed by the earth, as the astragalus by the hyena, but return again to light and life in a new and divine existence! 787 825

The last astragalus of the set is the *malumbi*, the astragalus of the *shipene* or *mangulwe* antelope ; it is also asexual : *shirombe sha matiko, malumbyana wa tintibo, ntsinyarendjo*! the miserable of the land, the little antelope with white spots, the one which stops travellers (p. 347)! It plays a special part in the divinatory system, representing everything which is violent (leba) : the chief, the enemy, and especially the mysterious power of Heaven. For that reason it is watched with great attention by those who cast bones in connection with rain. When it falls in the "mild" position, it means that "the eye of Heaven is open, the knot is untied, the mouth of Heaven is open, rain will fall!" Then Mankhelu will make the offering (mhamba) for rain ; first the four leaves, then, if this is not sufficient, and if the chief requires it, the sacrifice of the black ram (p. 322, 316).

I include in the category of bones the pieces of *Tortoise shell*, *mfutju*, four of which are found in Mankhelu's basket : *mbulwa wa mfutju*, the adult male tortoise, *nsati, ntibula ya mfutju*, the young tortoise. According to the way in which they fall, these objects designate peace or misfortune for the village, prosperity or starvation (1).

b) The second category comprises the objects which are not bones or parts of the body of an animal. The most conspicuous are the *sea-shells* (djuma, dji-ma) belonging to two different genera : the *Oliva* shells, representing the attributes of the male, assagais, virile courage, etc., the *Cypraea* shells, corresponding to the attributes of the female, baskets, pots, pregnancy, births, oxen for lobola, etc. 787

There are besides two *kanye stones* of an abnormal form, one

(1) One day, when travelling through heavy rain, Mankhelu found a tortoise and obtained one of his divinatory bones from it. Soon afterwards he came upon an animal (I did not catch its name) which had just died, and ate it. Some time later he was offered a big he-goat in a village. So when the tortoise falls together with the astragalus of that animal, it is a sign that plenty of meat will be forthcoming!